

T/50R 4/1/47

# fifth estate

Vol. 33 #1 (351)

Summer 1998

\$2

## WELCOME TO AMERICA

Illustration/Richard Mock



INSIDE: Tao of Anarchy,  
Chumbawamba's Anarchism, Stop  
Recycling?, The Art of Wandering,  
Iraq, Unabomber Cops a Plea

**I** arrived early at Clutch Cargo's, once an imposing church, but now a trendy rock joint in yuppified downtown Pontiac, a gritty, predominantly black, industrial Detroit suburb. The occasion was a concert by Chumbawamba, the anarchist pop group from Leeds, England, which has achieved international acclaim for their catchy hit, "Tubthumping."

The song is so ubiquitous—I get knocked down, but I get up again; you're never going to keep me down—that not only has it topped the charts in Europe, North America and Asia with triple platinum sales, but is now played at sporting events worldwide, supplanting staples such as Queen's, "We Are The Champions." The song, featured on a promotional compilation for the new VW Beetle, was heard recently on cheesy TV shows like "Beverly Hills 90210," and "Veronica's Closet" and is also on the sound track of the Hollywood production of "Home Alone 3."

To most listeners, there's little more to Chumbawamba than a band with a pop hit featuring an infectious hook that everyone will probably be sick of by the time this is read. But Chumbawamba is an unlikely candidate for commercial stardom. Probably unknown to most of the group's newly acquired fans, the group has long been a favorite of the international anarchist community for their uncompromising songs challenging the political state and capitalism. The band's origins go back 15 years in the British punk movement, and its members define themselves as revolutionary anarchists.

Their recent limited edition, "Showtime," distributed by AK Press, an anarchist publisher, is a double-CD with a Noam Chomsky speech featured on the second disk. On it, the band plays a live performance before an enthusiastic crowd in a Leeds pub during a two-day benefit for the local Anti-Fascist Action organization. During the concerts, a defense guard was on hand to protect the venue from English neo-nazis who had threatened to attack the event. During the night following the first performance, the pub's windows were smashed, but the second evening came off without incident.

#### Revolutionary Anthems

Chumbawamba played Detroit in 1993 at 404, a small storefront anarchist club that held about 50 people comfortably. That August night, with temperatures in the 80's outside, about 75 sweaty people jammed into the space, many of them stripped to the waist, and danced wildly to the band's infectious music and cheered their explicit revolutionary anthems.

Alice Nutter, one of the band's vocalists, remembers the event. "Yeah, we had to put Boff's amp on the cooker [the stove]," she says. "and we had to stop every once in a while to ask if anyone wanted to go to the toilet." The place was so crowded that the musicians were blocking the entrance to the only bathroom.

Four years later, the band is at the pinnacle of international fame and many people in the anarchist milieu are wondering whether success will spoil Chumbawamba. How does a group that has been featured in every publication from *The New York Times* to *USA Today* deal with fame and still hang on to its anti-authoritarian principles?

When the doors to Clutch Cargo's opened, the first rush of patrons looked as

though they had just been dropped off by their moms from a Saturday afternoon at a shopping mall. In ran a stream of hyper-enthusiastic 11, 12 and 13-year-olds, followed by their parents, many who decidedly looked like they had been dragged to a concert they didn't want to attend. Eventually the audience was mainly comprised of adults, but a friend told me later, as if to emphasize Chumbawamba's popularity with pre-teens, "Yeah, they're my eight-year-old's favorite group."

#### A Rousing Hand

I was there with several striking Detroit newspaper workers at the invitation of Nutter whom I had interviewed for Detroit's weekly Metro Times. Several days after I spoke with her, I wondered whether she was aware of the almost three-year strike against the two local dailies, fearing one of the scab papers might try to get an interview with members of the band. My call was too late. Alice had already talked to a scab reporter and was anguished she hadn't known of the boycott. She offered to let the strikers speak from the stage before their performance and set up a literature table in the lobby along with one from the local chapter of Anti-Racist Action (ARA).

Given all the kids in the audience, we didn't know what the reaction would be to a labor message, but when Barbara Ingalls, a locked-out printer, took the stage she got a rousing hand. Later, during the performance, Danbert Nobacon, another of the vocalists, dedicated a song to the strikers and took a newspaper boycott sign on stage with him.

So far, so good. But Chumbawamba's latest album, "Tubthumper," was a mystery to many of their long-time



photo/peter Goettcher

# Will Success Spoil Chumbawamba?

by Peter Werbe

U.S. admirers. It was released in the U.S. on Universal, a major corporate label, and gone were the explicit anarchist lyrics denouncing oppression. Although tubthumping is the old name for radical street corner speaking, the latest lyrics are a gentler, more ambiguous set with nothing in them to directly suggest their core politics. Their big hit, a corny tribute to indomitability, also celebrates the male culture of drinking at sporting events—*He drinks a whisky drink; he drinks a vodka drink; he drinks a lager drink.*

The answer to our curiosity as to whether we were going to see a domesticated Chumbawamba came with the first song—one of their old ones—*"Give the Anarchist a Cigarette"—Nothing burns down by itself; every fire needs a little help.* And, as if to assure the audience this was a band whose commitment remains intact, the next tune was another oldie, "Mouthful of Shit," which the band dedicated to British Prime Minister Tony Blair and U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Although many of the tunes they played were from their latest album, others were

clearly anarchist and anti-religious. It was impossible to determine what the soccer moms and their kids thought while sitting through this, but when the band finally sang "Tubthumper," the whole place exploded. Everyone was on their feet singing the chorus in unison, throwing their fists in the air, and then it was over. An encore? Sure. They did an a cappella version of their earlier "Homophobia" just so the words, which are sometimes lost in their English Midlands accents, were perfectly clear—*Homophobia, the worst disease; love how you want and love who you please.*

Following the performance, Nutter told us how two days earlier the band had taped a performance of "Tubthumper" for TV's David Letterman Show. In the middle of the song they began chanting, "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal," before going back to the famous chorus. The show's producers went apoplectic, saying they believed Mumia was innocent, but that he was a "convicted cop killer" and the band would have to do the segment again or it wouldn't air. After a short conference, the group members

refused and left the studio.

Much to their surprise, the segment ran as recorded, but Nutter commented afterward, "I don't think we'll be invited back."

After the band appeared Jan. 20 on ABC-TV's "Politically Incorrect" with Bill Maher and repeated the shoplifting advice her band often gives in interviews, twelve Virgin Records megastores in Los Angeles took "Tubthumper" off their shelves and put it behind the counter. Nutter said she believed it was just "fine" for poor people to shoplift records from chains.

"We were dismayed by her saying this kind of thing," whined Christos Garkinos, Virgin marketing vice-president. "Especially since we were one of the band's early supporters."

Nutter said it was Maher who singled out Virgin as a possible target, and she attempted to change the topic to "why people can't afford records and feel the need to shoplift in an unequal world."

Nutter defends the less confrontational character of the band's new lyrical direction. *Continued on page 4*

# Tales From The Planet



Bring on the commandos for the other leg.

## Of Whales & Wages

The fact that casino gambling is a sure sucker's bet doesn't keep the rubes from flocking to the tables hoping they'll be the ones to beat the odds. In Las Vegas, competition is hot to reel in what the industry designates as "whales," those high rollers who bet in the millions each visit and have credit lines of up to \$20 million.

There is such intense competition among the casinos to land the whales that premium gamblers are offered lavish 12,000 square-foot Italian marble suites featuring ceiling murals, Jacuzzis, swimming pools, and walls adorned with Picassos, Monets, and Renoirs—all gratis. Everything they want is free upon request including such amenities as vintage wine worth thousands of dollars a bottle.



by Coatimundi

Whatever one thought of Ted Kaczynski before his trial, by January, when he admitted he was the Unabomber, thus avoiding a death penalty by pleading guilty to an 18-year bombing campaign, one had to feel a certain sympathy for him. After several weeks of struggling with a defense team apparently determined to portray him as severely mentally ill in order to save him from execution (even over his own objections and desire to represent himself), and with a federal judge who committed a number of egregious procedural errors that would have almost certainly led to successful appeals, Kaczynski apparently took the only option he thought he had to avoid a trial that would present him as an incompetent madman, and copped a plea.

During recent celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the first Spanish settlement in the American West, an Indian commando group sawed off the metal foot of the town's Onate statue igniting a controversy as to whether the bloody conqueror is worthy of a memorial.

Into the fray leapt Marc Simmons, a biographer of Onate, who defended the conqueror, saying that the foot chopping incident shouldn't overshadow his other "accomplishments." Simmons noted that Onate was a "founder of the livestock industry, the mining industry, and he opened the first major road, the Camino Real." The writer added, "He brought Christianity and Western culture."

See Unabomber page 23

## Mumia Judge Out

Mumia Abu-Jamal's appeal that his conviction and death sentence be overturned for the 1981 death of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner is still pending before Pennsylvania's Supreme Court. The recent election of an extreme conservative justice to a court that has never granted a new trial, much less dismissed charges for a death-row inmate, does not bode well.

If the court upholds the death sentence, Penn. Governor Thomas Ridge promises to sign an immediate warrant setting a new date for execution. In event of this, Mumia's attorneys will go to the federal courts including the Supreme Court if necessary for an emergency stay.

The only good news is that hanging judge Albert Sabo, who sentenced 31 men to death during his judicial tenure and presided over Mumia's original trial and subsequent appeal hearings, has been removed from his position following numerous complaints. Sabo's outrageously biased handling of Mumia's case is central to his appeal.

Support continues to grow for Mumia including his recent election as a vice-president of the National Lawyers Guild.

Contact the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal to be in immediate touch with developments in this case. The vindictive and corrupt apparatus of the Philadelphia police and their handmaids on the court are anxious to dispatch Mumia quickly. Contact his committee at 163 Amsterdam Ave., #115, New York NY 10023; 212-580-1022; e-mail: fhostmann@msn.com.

## Mutillator Honored

Damned By Faint Praise Dept.: A dispute in Espanola, New Mexico is raging between Hispanic and Native people over a statue honoring a 16th century conquistador, Don Juan de Onate. The Spanish adventurer suppressed the Acoma pueblo in 1599 and had the right foot of 24 warriors cut off as punishment for their rebellion against his rule.

During recent celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the first Spanish settlement in the American West, an Indian commando group sawed off the metal foot of the town's Onate statue igniting a controversy as to whether the bloody conqueror is worthy of a memorial.

Into the fray leapt Marc Simmons, a biographer of Onate, who defended the conqueror, saying that the foot chopping incident shouldn't overshadow his other "accomplishments." Simmons noted that Onate was a "founder of the livestock industry, the mining industry, and he opened the first major road, the Camino Real." The writer added, "He brought Christianity and Western culture."

While this wretched excess proceeds, one casino resisted unionization efforts for over six years, arguing they couldn't remain competitive if they had to pay astronomical wages like \$7 an hour for custodians.

## Armed Forest Defense

The Samhain *Earth First! Journal* reports that a group of ex-Sandinistas and their former rivals, the Contras, are cooperating to defend Nicaragua's North Atlantic region rainforest. On September 12, 60 armed members of El Frontero Ecologico Armado confronted loggers felling trees and building roads. The guerrilla group confiscated 25 chainsaws and publicly burned them in Puerto Viejo's central plaza.

Another group, El Movimiento Ambiental Nicaraguense, announced their intention to block main highways in Jinotega and Matagalpa to defend the forest. Also, indigenous people are mobilizing to defend their homes.

For information, contact Native Forest Network for more information at 802-863-0571; e-mail: fnfena@igc.apc.org.

## Redwood Summer Suit Victory

A California judge has ruled that FBI agents and Oakland, California Police officers can be prosecuted for conspiracy and other charges relating to the 1990 car bombing of Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney. The two *Earth First!* activists began a law suit charging the agencies attempted to

frame them for the incident in which the late Judi Bari suffered crippling injuries.

The FBI and northern California police departments were collaborating with logging corporations to thwart the Redwood Summer project defending the state's old growth forests. Earlier court proceedings showed Bari and Cherney were under surveillance because of their work organizing protest activities, but the FBI claims they "lost" some of the most damning documents.

The Redwood Summer Justice Project has been working for seven years to find the bombers, but tremendous legal efforts are still needed to pursue their historic civil rights lawsuit. The recent ruling raises hopes that at least some of the perpetrators and planners of the vile attack on Judi and Darryl will be exposed.

Send tax-deductible donations to Redwood Justice Fund PO Box 14720 Santa Rosa CA 95402.

## www.Surprise!

Investors seeking information about Mexican government finances on the Internet got a surprise Feb. 6 after Zapatista rebels hacked into the world wide web home page of the Mexican Treasury Department. Instead of financial statistics on how to further exploit workers and campesinos, they found a message from Subcomandante Marcos portrayed against a background of Emiliano Zapata. The embarrassed government quickly restored the page.

## Jericho '98 March

WASHINGTON DC—5,000 people from across North America assembled here March 27 for Jericho '98, a day of protest in support of U.S. political prisoners. The demonstration marched to the White House led by large puppets and included an anarchist contingent of 500. It was a colorful parade, with black and black and red flags flying along side the African tri-color. The event was totally ignored by the media even though it was larger than a similar march held here in February to oppose U.S. aggression in Iraq.—Chuck

## Unabomber Cops A Plea

citizen Kaczynski to paint him as mentally incompetent. Even though Kaczynski was found to be legally sane enough to represent himself, experts labeled him "paranoid schizophrenic" merely on the basis of his anti-technology ideas. Finnegan, who is surprisingly sympathetic to the defendant, considering that his article appears in a respectable bourgeois weekly, notes the irony in Kaczynski's treatment. The Unabomber manifesto had declared with remarkable foresight, "The concept of 'mental health' in our society is defined largely by the extent to which an individual behaves in accord with the needs of the system and does so without showing signs of stress." Even Kaczynski's denial that he was mentally ill and his refusal to be treated as such by his defense team in the trial process were portrayed as proof of his insanity. When his keepers discovered he was considering suicide as a way out of this endgame, in the manner of Huxley's Savage in *Brave New World*, they began to monitor him continually.

The Fifth Estate (ISSN No. 0015-0800) is published quarterly at 4632 Second Ave., Detroit, Michigan 48201 USA. Phone (313) 831-6800. Our office hours vary, so please call before visiting. Subscriptions are \$8.00 for four issues; \$10.00 foreign including Canada. Periodical Mail postage paid at Detroit, Michigan. No copyright. No paid advertisements.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: Fifth Estate, 4632 Second Ave., Detroit MI 48201 USA.



Clinton's Penis Attacks Hussein

## From Russia With Love

by Comrade AKAI-47

MOSCOW—Sometimes I wonder who has more sexual hang-ups: Moscow anarchists or Bill Clinton? Only serious perverts can truly understand Clinton's conflict with Iraq as more than the quest for domination; it's penis envy of Zhirinovskyesque proportions, the sublimated sexual aggression of two presidents played out on the world political stage.

Every day the saga of *Blow Me Bill* unravels, revealing new dimensions in the psycho-sexual. We ponder the myriad social implications in the unfolding drama: perversion and harassment, power and lust, the insistent shock of the press. And, think of Saddam, the misogynist creep, with his something to prove, his hatred of opposition, and his rejection of the free-loving Italian porno-politician Cicciolina—a sure sign that he can't get it up unless a chick's in a veil.

With such rich, fairy tale subject matter, we set out to protest against the threat of war in Iraq, against the sublimated sexual aggression of presidents the world over, against the role of media prostitutes ("journalists"), surrogate sexual voyeurism via pseudo-scandals, bourgeois morality—for free love and a world without rockets, presidents and the Moral Majority.

The name of the action, simply: **MAKE LOVE NOT WAR**.

The initial idea was for an artistic representation of the problem as we saw it: one dimensional figures of Clinton, Hussein and Monica Lewinsky with her face cut out—the symbolic everywoman, sexual body, any brain will do—put yourself in her place. Clinton and Hussein had moveable penises shaped as rockets that shot out fireworks; a separate hand-held papier mache penis ejaculated at each shot.

More and more individuals with group complexes joined up: The Fighting Amazons/Direct Action Group; The Moscow Committee for Sexual Revolution; the Emma Goldman Dancing Brigade; The No-Limits Journalist Association; the Sigmund Freud Family Circle; the Union of Offended Secretaries; the Alexandra Kollontai and Princess Diana Groups of the "No Shame Society"; The Initiative for video cameras in Presidential Chambers; and the Moscow Section of the American-Iraqi Friendship Society. Enough for proper street theater.

On March 7, our theater action took place outside the American Embassy in Moscow. Among those represented were Bill, Monica and Saddam, Bill's Penis (a boy in a plastic bag, complete with balloon balls), the 6th Fleet, a harem, the press, Sigmund Freud and a storyteller.

Bill's Penis was very well played, getting hard, getting soft, desperately harassing women and aggressively attacking Hussein. Bill himself was busy sloganizing clichés such as, "More Women in the White House." Millions of TV viewers across Russia got an unusually long look at the action, but, keeping true to soft-porn traditions, they didn't show any dick! And Monica in drag sent out memorable wishes of the day to the women of Russia on the upcoming Women's Day holiday.\*

Ironically, the biological and chemical

an anxious, vicarious, privatized struggle for survival. For some, mass death is a reality; for others, succumbing to what one pundit has called "weapons of mass distraction," it's still only a Saturday evening's entertainment.

As the global megatechnic war-and-work machine chugs along, reeling from crisis to crisis, one can only wonder when and where the next scandal, collapse, or military conflict will suddenly appear. Whatever we may accomplish, how we respond to Capital's war—and its "peace"—means everything in defining who, and what, we are.

Let us gather our own meager resources and take a stand against all empires, as they drive humanity's frail ship deeper into the night.

## Clinton Threatened Nukes in Gulf

by Bill Weinberg



"Smart Bomb" — graphic by Richard Mock

## The Empire's War Was Averted—What Will We Do about the "Peace"?

by Ali Moossavi and David Watson

**B**y last count, 1.5 million Iraqis, one million of them children under five, have died as a result of the U.S./U.N. sanctions, either through starvation or from lack of medicine for easily curable diseases. People are dying at a rate of about 11,000 a month, and some four million more are on the verge of starvation. In the seven years since the 1991 Gulf War's intense and devastating bombing campaign, Iraq has become the international oil economy's extermination camp.

Throughout history empires have generally improved upon their predecessors' methods of mass murder; old fashioned siege and starvation, however, persist. Despite Clinton's recent threats to save Iraq by bombing it, none of his death technology can match the grisly consequences of the sanctions. People cannot avoid sanctions by hiding in a bomb shelter, or escape hunger in a bombed-out school, or narrowly avoid cholera in a forest. One needn't be sympathetic to the Iraqi despots to agree with the Iraqi foreign minister's comment that the sanctions themselves are weapons of mass destruction.

One is reminded of the Irish famine of 1845-51. The failure of the Irish potato crop was by no means the result of a conscious conspiracy, but the British used it as a weapon to force submission on a rebellious nation. Ultimately, the continued forced requisitioning of crops, mass emigration and mass evictions had a predictable outcome: more than a million people lost their lives to disease and starvation—about the same number in almost the same length of time the U.N. sanctions have done their work in Iraq. American history provides other instances of starvation and disease as weapons of conquest, not least the mass depopulation of this continent of those who found themselves in the way of Manifest Destiny.

During the same period in the U.S., millions have returned again and again to movie theaters to see the most expensive film ever produced, the technological extravaganza *Titanic*. As Iraqis sit on their doorsteps waiting for the bombs to fall, Americans thrill to the spectacle of catastrophe, wavering between an aestheticized, luxurious sense of passive surrender and

war we are warned of today already occurred in 1991, as U.S./U.N. terror bombing obliterated Iraqi civilian infrastructures, particularly the electrical and water treatment systems, and the civilian population succumbed as surely as it would have under the onslaught of biological warheads. Furthermore, another round of bombing would have done nothing to impede Saddam Hussein's production of chemical and biological weapons—the "poor man's nuclear arsenal"—but rather would only have bounced the rubble around, while completely devastating what tenuous humanitarian assistance remains. Still, the U.S. was interested in flexing imperial muscle if for no other reason than to test new weapons such as the military's 5,000 pound "deep penetrator" bombs and its allegedly improved, so-called smart weapons.

As we write, hundreds more children are dying in Iraq, thousands more starve and are sickened, schools close, and families are forced to sell their belongings and sometimes their bodies in order to survive. Such suffering mostly goes unnoticed, a detail in history without a museum to honor its victims. Things have gotten so bad for the Iraqis that in the weeks leading up to possible air strikes, very few people bothered to fortify houses or stockpile what meager resources could be found; some have told Western journalists that they wish the Americans would bomb them once and for all and put them out of their misery. But Iraqi misery is just an extreme example of conditions that are becoming a grim fact of life for growing numbers of people under global capitalism.

What was "unthinkable" during most of the Cold War—since it assumed a 20-minute nuclear war that would leave the Earth in cinders—has now become thinkable. Today's "tactical" nukes—the kind fitted onto a Cruise missile for use against an Iraqi bunker—deliver the kind of punch that wiped out Hiroshima. After use of tactical or battlefield nukes, the next threshold in the acceptable level of global violence is strategic nukes.

Clinton's nuclear threat brings us a step closer to the earth in cinders.\*

anxious, vicarious, privatized struggle for survival. For some, mass death is a reality; for others, succumbing to what one pundit has called "weapons of mass distraction," it's still only a Saturday evening's entertainment.

As the global megatechnic war-and-work machine chugs along, reeling from crisis to crisis, one can only wonder when and where the next scandal, collapse, or military conflict will suddenly appear. Whatever we may accomplish, how we respond to Capital's war—and its "peace"—means everything in defining who, and what, we are.

Let us gather our own meager resources and take a stand against all empires, as they drive humanity's frail ship deeper into the night.

## Clinton Threatened Nukes in Gulf

by Bill Weinberg

Mid all the media saturation about oral sex in the Oval Office, it went almost unnoticed that Bill Clinton considered use of nuclear weapons against Iraq to take out Saddam Hussein's underground complexes, or to retaliate for an Iraqi chemical or biological attack by issuing Presidential Policy Directive 60 (PPD 60).

Following a brief flicker of media coverage of this battlefield contingency order in early February, Russian President Boris Yeltsin warned that escalation in the Persian Gulf could lead to World War III. This was portrayed in the U.S. press as irresponsible alarmism. PPD 60 is already down the memory hole.

Threatening nuclear strikes to fight weapons of mass destruction is a concept straight out of Orwell. Hussein is not "this generation's Hitler." Like Noriega, he is a U.S.-groomed client gone bad. His gassing of the Kurds at Halabja in 1988, a clearly genocidal act, occurred when he was still a U.S. asset. (A Congressional bill calling for sanctions in the wake of that atrocity never made it out of Congress.)

True to the principles of doublethink, Americans remain blind to Desert Storm's 400,000 civilian casualties in 1991, or the fact that the holocaust of Schwartzkopf & Co. dwarfed Iraqi atrocities and environmental terrorism in Kuwait.

Where are the voices pointing out that Clinton crossed a dangerous threshold—the normalization of nuclear warfare? Perhaps the citizens are more interested in sex scandals and sports as the world takes a step closer to its end. The war drive this time elicited neither jingoistic approval nor outraged protest. It provoked mostly our indifference—one more spectacular titillation in a world dominated by the media.

What was "unthinkable" during most of the Cold War—since it assumed a 20-minute nuclear war that would leave the Earth in cinders—has now become thinkable. Today's "tactical" nukes—the kind fitted onto a Cruise missile for use against an Iraqi bunker—deliver the kind of punch that wiped out Hiroshima. After use of tactical or battlefield nukes, the next threshold in the acceptable level of global violence is strategic nukes.

Clinton's nuclear threat brings us a step closer to the earth in cinders.\*

# Will Success Spoil Chumbawamba?

Continued from page 1

tion and insists that their intent remains unchanged. "We don't want to just get our pop music into people's homes," she says. "We want to get anarchist ideas along with it."

Although there is little on their current album to overtly suggest this perspective, band members say this wasn't a marketing strategy. They had completed the album a year before signing with EMI in Britain after being dumped by their independent label which advised the band to "Take a year off and write stronger songs."

Pointing to an earlier recording, Nutter says, "If you look at our album, 'Pictures of Starving Children,' the way those songs are written, they're just theses. Each song has at least 32-lines, none of them repeated, and no chorus, because we were trying to get in as many words as possible." She says they wanted to do music with "choruses and hook lines, and were constructed like ordinary pop songs." Nutter says the band decided if they wanted to "really touch people," they had to "put the theses somewhere else."

Unfortunately, with the U.S. release of "Tubthumper" on Universal, only half of their equation worked. They've got their top-of-the-charts music on MTV, on karaoke machines and at sporting events, but most people, like the prepubescent kids at Clutch Cargo's, were clueless as to the "theses" that ultimately animate Chumbawamba. An ad for a record chain in a local Detroit paper informed potential buyers that "this was the group's eighth album. Previously known for their politically charged lyrics, they toned down the social commentary just a bit on this album."

## Anarchist Spin

The "somewhere else" for the theses mentioned above was supposed to be the latest album's liner notes. The band spent months finding quotes from historic and contemporary radical figures that would give an anarchist spin to words which in themselves don't directly convey that message. These were contained in a thick booklet accompanying the CD in its European and Asian release. However, Universal's American lawyers threw up a roadblock demanding a clearance on each quote. This would have delayed the debut of the album for months and left the band in an untenable position—a further wait for its release or an expurgated version. They chose the latter.

"Maybe we could understand about a quote from Orwell," Nutter says angrily, "but do you have to get clearance on ownership of anonymous graffiti taken from a wall in Paris in 1968?" She expresses frustration about how the album appears without the liner notes: "People in Europe and Asia got the album we wanted; in America they didn't. The last thing in the world we are is lap liberals; we're anarchists."

Following the lyrics of each song in the truncated booklet that appears with the American release is an invitation for people to write or e-mail the band for the missing quotes.

Of course, the debate about what constitutes "selling-out" is a complicated one, and hardly new to rock and roll. Obvious examples, from the early '70s include

# Chumba Soaks Brit Deputy PM

Chumbawamba made international news Feb. 9 when two of their members poured a bucket of iced water over the head of the British Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, at a posh music awards dinner. The action received extensive press and TV coverage. The following is a report we received from Chumbawamba.

We'd already spent part of the evening trying to get passes for people outside who were protesting against the treatment of workers by Polygram, a record company employing people at practically slave labour rates in the UK. Security with bow-ties and red faces were scanning the seated arena for any sign of trouble. Walkie-talkies were spitting and crackling. [Chumbawamba's] Danbert and Alice decided to have a quiet word with Mr. Prescott and his party, bent on steering the conversation around to New Labour's despicable treatment of 500 sacked Liverpool dockworkers.

The bucket of iced water at Prescott's feet was too tempting. Taking his cue from the infamous custard-pie attacker in Belgium who recently covered the visiting Bill Gates in yellow goo, Danbert carefully aimed the whole thing at our Great Leader's Understudy and saying, "This is for the Liverpool dockers," poured the whole lot over his New Labour suit.

Danbert was immediately seized by security and led away by cops. Mass panic everywhere. Head plain-clothes cop seeing his Head Of Security promotion going down the drain. People laughing. Cops not knowing what to do. "What's your name? Who are you?" Prescott decided not to press charges in order to avoid the debacle of a court case where the second-highest political figure in the country tries to sue someone for wetting his suit.

The next morning we wrote a press release to explain why the Deputy prime Minister had been "attacked." It stated in part:

"This wanton act of agit-prop is dedicated to single mothers, sacked dockworkers, people being forced into workfare, people who will be denied legal aid, students who will be denied the free education that the whole Labour front bench benefited from, the homeless, and all of the underclass who are now suffering at the hands of the Labour government."

wide distribution necessary for this sort of demand.

Musically there's not much to distinguish "Tubthumper" from their recent albums, but lyrics needing supporting quotes or explanations to achieve the radical thrust the group desires suggest an inherent weakness. Although the band sees the new

—graphic/Kate Matt



album's songs as threaded together, the themes by themselves don't seem to portray more than a protest against the anonymity and falseness of modern society. "One by One" does indict bureaucratic labor leaders and "Scapegoat" criticizes blaming others, but as the band laments, they could easily come off as "lap libertines" when the music stands by itself.

Nutter's criticism of their previous music seems curious. Many of their older tunes such as "Never Do What You Are Told," "That's How Grateful We Are," and "Homophobia," had the hooks and choruses she mentions approvingly. Their "I Never Gave Up" is an earlier "Tubthumping," with a similar theme—I crawled in the mud, but I never gave up—not stated quite as elegantly, but certainly with a memorable chorus.

To their credit, the band seems intent on using their fame to promote anarchist ideas. After a U.S. tour in late 1997, they headed back to England to do a series of benefits for several rape crisis centers and anti-fascist groups. "We were influenced by bands like Crass with the idea pop music could be intensely political," Nutter recalls. "They introduced us to the idea that songs didn't have to be about love, and they called themselves anarchist. Chumbawamba doesn't want to be just a pop group. We also want to be part of a radical community away from music because real life is more exciting than a rock and roll circus."

As to the question of success affecting them, she says, "As soon as it starts to spoil us, we have to give up what we're doing." Asked about the band's future plans, "To be in 'Home Alone 4,'" Nutter jokes.

Note: The suppressed liner notes are available from Chumbawamba, PO Box TR666, Leeds LS12 3XJ, UK or at [www.chumba.com](http://www.chumba.com). "Showtime" can be ordered from Fifth Estate Books.

# Free The Gandalf Defendants

## Green Anarchist Editors Imprisoned

After a long and expensive campaign against Britain's growing animal and earth liberation movements, three editors of the Green Anarchist (GA) magazine have been convicted for the crime of publishing reports of economic sabotage.

In early 1995, England's notorious secret police, the Special Branch, formed the Animal Rights National Index (ARNI), a division created specifically to squelch direct actions by earth/animal activists. Once in operation, the squad launched a series of 55 raids throughout the country.

The threat posed by the cooperation of these movements in carrying out numerous high profile actions in defense of the earth and animals was considered so serious by the authorities that at one point as many as 60 cops comprised the ARNI squad.

However, even after the numerous raids harassment, the police activity resulted only in the prosecution of four GA editors, an Animal Liberation Front (ALF) press officer and the newsletter editor of the ALF Supporters Group ALFSG. They are known together as the Gandalf Defendants from GA and ALF.

Using the content of news articles of ecotage and militant defense of animals appearing in the publications, the six were charged with "conspiring together to incite persons unknown to commit criminal damage."

Although those arrested never met before their trial and no actual criminal damage was shown to have been committed as a result of reading GA or the ALFSG newsletter, the State needed (according to its warped justice system) only to demonstrate that the defendants "supported such actions and therefore wished them to occur." In an English so-called "conspiracy to incite" case, it is the responsibility of those facing prosecution to show that they did not intend to incite anyone.

The trial of Steve Booth, Sax Wood, Noel Molland, and Simon Russell ended Nov. 12, when a jury returned a guilty verdict for GA editors Booth, Wood and Molland. Russell, the former editor of the ALFSG-UK newsletter was found not guilty. Paul Rodgers, GA's general editor, was severed from the Gandalf trial when his barrister resigned and Robin Webb, the ALF press officer, was released before trial on a technicality but still faces charges.

Presiding Judge David Selwood sentenced the defendants to three years in prison.

The trial is estimated to have cost the government two million pounds to conduct, with the investigation, "Operation Washington," which lead to the arrests, costing a similar sum. This is \$6.5 million in U.S. dollars.

However, the high cost of the police work and trial did not insure its quality. According to observers at the hearing, Judge Selwood was visibly drunk during most of the proceedings and had to be reminded constantly of the defendants' names. At one point, he openly declared from the bench "he thought the defendants were guilty," according to Wood's barrister. A key witness for the defense, Darren Thurston, a North American ALF activist, was deported from the U.K. before being allowed to testify that it was he and not

Simon Russell who had put a report on the Internet about the Justice Department (a covert, militant animal rights group).

Readers of this newspaper know this is not an isolated case of injustice. The independent press is often the last bastion of rebellious voices against the total domination of the planet by the economic and political megamachine. (See article below). These convictions, coming on the heels of the infamous McLibel trial, have ominous implications for movements advocating revolutionary change. The English government is trying to criminalize a whole range of beliefs to safeguard the corporate interests it represents. Formal guarantee of press freedom easily evaporates when publications challenge the ruling order.

If the mere act of publishing reports describing acts of ecotage and similar revolutionary thrusts can successfully be criminalized, how much more difficult will our work be? For instance, under the logic of the Gandalf case, if Ted Kaczynski could have been shown to have read the Fifth Estate and the Earth First! Journal before his Unabomber attacks, their writers and editors would be subject to prosecution. The Fifth Estate has frequently reported on (and "supported such actions and therefore wishing them to occur") a number of militant green actions in the U.K. such as road-ripping parties, ecotage, and anti-road campaigns. In England, we'd be in jail.

And, let's be direct: when we publish articles about ecotage and revolution, we intend to encourage people to do what is necessary to defend the earth and to protect its beings from the ravages of ecocidal industrialism, multi-national corporations, and repressive governments.

Those who count themselves as enemies of the State and friends of the natural world should rally support for the success of the Gandalf Defendants' appeal and to prove our movement is strong enough to withstand this repression.

For more information about the case

and how you can help the defendants, contact: Gandalf Defendants Campaign, Box 66, Stevenage, SG1 2TR, England. See Page 21 for their addresses.—Maya



### Message from Marcos

#### The Media and the Fourth World War

The following is from a translated text of a videotaped message from Subcomandante Marcos, spokesperson for Mexico's Zapatista National Liberation Front, to a January 1997 Freeing the Media teach-in in New York City.

We're in the mountains of southeast Mexico, in the Lacandon Jungle of Chiapas, and we want to send a greeting to our brothers and sisters in independent communication media from the U.S. and Canada.

A global decomposition is taking place that we call the Fourth World War: neoliberalism, a global process to eliminate that multitude of people who are not useful to the powerful—the groups called "minorities" in the mathematics of power, but who happen to be the majority population in the world.

We find ourselves in a world system of globalization willing to sacrifice millions of human beings. The giant communication media, the great monsters of the television industry, the communication satellites, magazines and newspapers, seem determined to present a virtual world, created in the image of what the globalization process requires.

In this sense, the world of contemporary news is a world that exists for the VIPs. These major movie stars and big politicians, their everyday lives are what is important: if they get married, if they divorce, if they eat, what clothes they wear, or what clothes they take off. But common people only appear for a moment—when they kill some-

one, or when they die. This can't go on; sooner or later this virtual world clashes with the real world. And that is actually happening: This clash results in rebellion and war through the entire world.

We have a choice: We can have a cynical attitude in the face of the media, to say that nothing can be done about the dollar power that creates itself in images, words, digital communication and computer systems, that invades not just with an invasion of power, but with a way of seeing the world, of how it thinks the world should look. We could say, well, that's the way it is, and do nothing. Or we can simply assume incredulity: We can say that any communication by the media monopolies is a total lie. We can ignore it and go about our lives.

#### Tell The History

But there is a third option that is neither conformity nor disbelief: That is to construct a different way—to show the world what is really happening—to have a critical world view and to become interested in the truth of what happens to the people who inhabit every corner of this world.

The work of independent media is to tell the history of social struggle in the world, and here in North America—the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Independent media have, on occasion, been able to open spaces even within the mass media monopolies: to force them to acknowledge news of other social movements.

The problem is not only to know what is occurring in the world, but to understand it and to derive lessons from it—just as if we were studying history—a history not of

the past, but a history of what is happening at any given moment in whatever part of the world. This is the way to learn who we are, what it is we want, who we can be and what we can or cannot do.

By not having to answer to the monster media monopolies, the independent media have a lifework, a political project and purpose: to let the truth be known. This is more and more important in the globalization process. This truth becomes a knot of resistance against the lie. It is our only possibility to save the truth, to maintain it and distribute it, little by little, just as the books were saved in Fahrenheit 451—in which a group of people dedicated themselves to memorize books, to save them from being destroyed, so that the ideas would not be lost.

In this same way, independent media try to save history: the present history—saving it and trying to share it, so it will not disappear; moreover, to distribute it to other places, so that this history is not limited to one country, to one region, to one city or social group. It is necessary not only for independent voices to exchange information and to broaden the channels, but to resist the spreading lies of monopolies.

In August 1996, we called for the creation of a network of independent media, a network of information. We mean a network to resist the power of the lie that sells us the Fourth World War. We need this network not only as a tool for our social movements, but for our lives.

# Detroit Seen

Welcome to our Summer 1998 edition. Thanks to everyone who had a hand in creating our 351st issue. This issue follows our Fall 1997 edition, so please note that there was not an issue designated Winter or Spring.

As always, you can keep track of issues by noting the number in parentheses. Subscriptions expire after you have received four issues, not a calendar year. Special thanks to our Sustainers and to those who made generous donations with their subscription renewals. Also, to our writers and artists whose works grace our pages.

Apparently we gloated too soon about the imprisonment of Larry Nevers (See Fall 1997 FE). The Detroit killer cop bitterly complained about there not being enough "white people with spines" after two Michigan courts refused to overturn his conviction for the 1992 brutal beating death of Malice Green, a black, unemployed steel-worker. Green died after receiving over a dozen blows to the head with a two-pound flashlight from the two cops after he was stopped in an inner city neighborhood.

But Nevers finally got his wish. In a decision marked by blatant favoritism and obvious racism, Reagan-appointed Federal District Judge Lawrence Zatkoff freed Nevers declaring the predominantly black jury was unduly influenced by several outside factors including watching the film "Malcolm X" during a break in testimony. Nevers' partner, Walter Budzyn, was convicted in a second trial.

A Michigan appeals court and the state supreme court both held that the evidence against Nevers, who has a long history of brutalizing and killing black residents, was so overwhelming that viewing the film did not have a determinative effect on the jury. But outside influences appear to have had a strong effect on the judge. Zatkoff is pals with officials from the arch-conservative Macomb County Republican Party who constitute the backbone of the Nevers suburban-based defense committee.

From the moment the case was brought to Zatkoff, the fix was in. In a highly unusual move, he ordered the case assigned to him rather than select a judge by normal procedures. Zatkoff sped the case through the docket three times faster than usual and presented an 88-page decision only 11 days after the prosecution's answer, minutes before the close of court for the New Years' holiday. It seems clear the judge wrote his brief prior to hearing the arguments.

Zatkoff took off his black robe and donned a white one to join the lynch mob who are horrified that a cop, even one with a brutal history, can be punished for killing an African-American. You can hear the racist mentality of Nevers' supporters on local right-wing talk radio as they vehemently denounce Malice Green as a "crack-head" and "low-life," as if this alone is grounds for execution at the hands of a cop death squad.

There's a homemade memorial at the corner of Warren Ave. and 23rd where Nevers bludgeoned the small, unresisting Green to death by 14 blows to the head with his two-pound flashlight. People from

all over come to pay their respects to a man considered a martyr by many in the community. They know Malice Green was not the first black person to die at the hands of racist cops, and they're afraid he won't be the last.

The centerpiece of the memorial is a mural painted on the side of an abandoned building by local artist Bennie White Ethiopia depicting a Christ-like Green. Two days after Nevers was welcomed home from four years in a Texas federal pen, someone vandalized the painting with a swastika and the words, "Never's Rules."

While Ethiopia quickly repaired the damage, the killer and his friends, all "white people with spines," were celebrating Judge Zatkoff's decision.

A Wayne County Circuit Court jury hearing the retrial of fired cop Walter Budzyn brought in a verdict of guilty of involuntary manslaughter, March 9, for his role in the beating death of Malice Green. Although convicted on a lesser charge than the original one of second degree murder, this second trial cut the ground out from under the racist contention that the two cops were victims of reverse racism by a vengeful, predominantly African-American jury.

Following Budzyn's conviction, racist state legislators abolished Detroit's 135-year-old mostly black city court system in retaliation for its effrontery of convicting Nevers and Budzyn.

However, the beating death of Green was so egregious, that the predominantly white county jury also brought in a verdict clearly condemning Budzyn.

When retired Detroit Mayor Coleman Young died of emphysema at age 78 last winter, he was buried with ceremonies fit for a pharaoh.

Young held office from 1974 to 1993, the era when Detroit cemented its identity as ground zero of the rust belt. After forty

false promise of industrial capitalism.

A flamboyant, witty, charming despot, tremendously corrupted by the trappings of power, Young cruised the city in an armor-plated limousine, surrounded by Uzi-toting guards. His lifestyle combined the proclivities of Howard Hughes and Hugh Hefner. Young sometimes holed up in his city-owned mansion on the Detroit River for weeks at a time, sleeping by day, playing solitaire dressed in pajamas by night in front of a glowing, big-screen TV. He dated women who worked for him, and fathered a child when he was 64 with the 34-year-old assistant director of the Department of Public Works.

With the city 80 percent black and the suburbs 90 percent white, metro Detroit is one of the nation's most segregated areas. Young was a polarizing figure. Black Detroiters generally admired him for his outspoken civil rights activism in his younger days and for attempting, in his own way as mayor, to rebuild Detroit, which had lost 400,000 residents in the twenty years before he took office. More than 90,000 people filed past his casket during the two days it was on view, and thousands more lined the route of his funeral procession, some of them waving or giving his passing hearse the black-power salute.

Whites largely despised Young, blaming him for capital's massive economic looting and abandonment of the central city, and because he was pugnacious and direct in challenging suburban racism. The level of irrational hatred against Young by whites was breathtaking. Racist comments and jokes were common, and few seemed to understand why black Detroiters reacted so emotionally to his passing.

While Young was provocative in discussing race, he was not above using it to advance his career. He assailed anyone who dared to oppose him as an "Uncle Tom," and once called an opponent whom he had accused of catering to whites "an important first in American politics—a black white hope." Local community activists, for example people who fought the Detroit trash incinerator (aptly dubbed "Coleman's Cathedral"), typically found

radical activities before World War II. In 1952, the House Committee on Un-American Activities summoned him to discuss communism among black union militants. "You have me mixed up with a stool pigeon," Young told the committee, which had ruined the reputations of countless people in its search for fellow travelers. Young boldly defied committee members, some of them Southerners, lecturing them on the proper pronunciation of "Negro" and refusing to answer their questions. "I am fighting against un-American activities such as lynchings and denial of the vote," Young declared.

Young's daring effrontery to the Congressional witch hunters was so admired in the African-American community that his testimony was released on a 78 rpm record and became a fast seller in the city's Black Bottom district.

Young's main method of resuscitating Detroit was to hand over tax breaks to wealthy corporations to build something, anything, to replace decrepit factories and homes left behind during decades of white flight.

His most memorable project was to level Poletown, a neighborhood of 3,400 working-class residents and hundreds of homes, shops and institutions, to make room for a General Motors luxury car plant.

It was one of the largest, fastest and most brutal urban renewals in American history. The irony of a former radical destroying peoples' homes for the world's largest corporation was not lost on everybody. But the spectacle of a proud black man begging white-run firms for a few measly crumbs was representative of the ultimate tragedy of Coleman Young.

This year marks three decades since the publication of the late John Hersey's *The Algiers Motel Incident*. Hersey, the acclaimed author of popular books such as *Hiroshima* and *A Bell for Adano*, came to Detroit shortly after the 1967 rebellion, so his investigation into the execution-style murders of three young African-American men in a sleazy motel attracted considerable attention.

To mark the anniversary, the John Hopkins University Press has reissued the book, coincidentally just in time for Walter Budzyn's retrial and conviction.

In the rebellion, 43 people died and 7,000 were arrested; it took the combined forces of police, state troopers, National Guard troops and the U.S. Army nearly a week to restore "order." Hersey's book focused on events at the Algiers Motel on July 26. Police and national guard troops raided the motel, ostensibly to hunt for snipers, though no guns were found.

Inside, they lined up seven black men and two white women along a wall, stripping the women and viciously beating the men. The cops took the guests one by one into a room, and when the night was over, three of the men had been shot dead as they assumed what the medical examiner termed "nonaggressive postures." The three white cops charged in the massacre were brought to an up-state venue tried by an all white jury and acquitted.

While readers may differ with Hersey's assertions that racism derives from the minds of people and not necessarily from a haywire social-economic system, the book is a fiery trip back in time, and questions who was really rioting during the tumultuous week the Motor City burned.



Part of ex-Detroit Mayor Coleman Young's legacy is his destruction of a working class district for a Cadillac plant and bulldozing (above) of artist Tyree Guyton's Heidelberg Project of found art which covered several blocks.—photo/Sunfrog

years of flight by the automakers, other manufacturers and hundreds of thousands of residents, the once heralded "Arsenal of Democracy" by the end of Young's reign had the highest poverty rate in urban America and was scruffy testimony to the

machines' footsoldiers to go back to the suburbs.

Young came out of the labor movement, and FBI files indicate he was followed, harassed and blacklisted for his

# How I Stopped Recycling & Learned to Love It

by Peter Werbe



The title of this article is somewhat misleading since I continue to recycle a portion of the waste produced daily by my household. What has changed is my previous diligence in making certain every scrap of what is recyclable winds up in my yellow curbside container.

Now I use my recycle bin solely because my trash has to be placed somewhere for disposal. However, if I had to make any concerted effort at all, such as sorting or transporting my trash to some facility, I'm sure I wouldn't bother.

I realize even the headline is a provocation to some people who see recycling as an important component in the campaign for a clean environment. However, the contention that this is an inadequate perspective, leading eventually to the *opposite* of its intent, is nothing new to the *Fifth Estate*.\*

Recycling is a classic case of co-optation by the reigning powers of genuine sentiment for reform. The idea of reprocessing waste items was put forth as a good faith solution by those in the ecology movement who saw the damage being done to the environment by the detritus of

production and consumption.

The 1980s gave rise to the construction of a rash of huge incinerators, including one in Detroit. This monstrous facility, the world's largest at the time of construction, sits three miles from the downtown area, less than a mile from the homes of several FE staff members. This insane techno-fix (doesn't everyone know burning anything produces toxins?) has as its basis the idea that we can continue current waste levels without having to pay the consequences.

Any sort of conservation or recycling is

\*See my "Recycling & Liberal Reform," in our 1990 Earth Day Special, an 8-page supplement, or in the Summer 1990 *FE*. Send \$2 for the latter; postage for the former.

officially discouraged since these babies need all the fuel they can get, often to meet contract requirements with local utilities to produce electricity. Unfortunately for the environment and the people living in the immediate area (almost always poor and/or minority), these incinerators emit a deadly stream of dioxins, furans, and heavy metals into the air which assault our immune system.

Even with all the evidence about toxicity levels emanating from incinerators, their fires remain stoked, and they continue to produce toxic ash (as much as 30 percent of what is burned needs to be buried in special landfills to contain their now-concentrated poisonous content).

Economically, incinerators are flattening all over the country due to their inability to produce the electricity for which they contracted to utilities. At one Detroit area burner, the operating authority has set up a special marketing division to seek trash from surrounding municipalities, and Canada if necessary, to meet its fuel needs.

In contrast, recycling seems like a reasonable alternative, particularly since it doesn't confront either our personal consumption level or society's aggregate mess. The only demand is that people place recyclables in a separate bin, something with which most good citizens were willing to comply even when not required by local ordinance. In municipalities where curbside recycling isn't provided as a city service, many people willingly make trips to recycling centers with their sorted trash feeling "they're at least doing something."

However, the "something" is illusory. Landfills remain the major destination for the majority of household garbage and when space runs out like it has in New York's Fishkill facility, the city contracts to have it shipped to sites in Virginia.

A quick visual check in your neighborhood should illustrate that recycling isn't significantly reducing the trash that will either be landfilled or incinerated. Estimate the volume in the non-recycled section of your trash or on your block compared to the relatively tiny amount in recycling containers. My box is filled maybe every two weeks, much of it with newspapers, but every week I set out one or two 30 gallon garbage cans. And that's with at least some consciousness on my part about waste, excessive consumption and the composting of all my vegetable matter.

## Mad Levels of Production

Some people argue that if recycling is not effective it at least functions as a gesture and is an important element towards understanding individual responsibility for our mess. However, the notion that recycling is even a little better than nothing produces only more illusions, not environmental sanity. Mad levels of production and consumption are at the core of capitalist economies, and unless that production is confronted, little will change.

To some extent this essay about individual disposal of household garbage should only be a footnote when talking about waste. Americans generate 8.5 billion tons of waste yearly, but the vast majority—98 percent—is from industrial and mining operations. The remaining two percent—172 million—is from municipal sources.

According to the Summer 1990 *Earth Island Journal*, the latter totals out to an average of 1360 pounds per person yearly for households, but a whopping 31 tons (!) for each of us from the major

sources.

The emphasis on household recycling functions as a diversion from examining the big sources of waste. A close look at the myths about recycling shows they are being perpetrated less by those committed to ecology and more by those doing the most damage to the planet. Even those active in administering recycling programs have come to recognize, for instance, that plastics consumption (an increasing percentage of the waste stream) is actually *encouraged* by recycling. For that reason, the Berkeley Ecology Center (BEC) announced in February 1996 that it would no longer accept plastics in the recycling program they administer for that California city.

Though they don't use it in production, the American Plastics Council, an industry group for virgin resin manufacturers (first-time-use plastics) has been a relentless promoter of plastics recycling. They've recently spent \$18 million on public relations as part of a propaganda campaign to change the long-standing perception of their product as harmful to the environment.

From its inception, plastic has been a synonym for the false and insubstantial. The late Frank Zappa sang about "plastic people" and the obscenely whispered advice to "The Graduate," similarly was, "Plaastics." Unfortunately, the businessman in the 1967 film ultimately was correct; the future did lie in that multi-use substance made from the oil for which the U.S. was willing to kill several hundred thousand Iraqis. The substitution of plastics for glass, wood and paper products has been so substantial that hardly anyone even notices. Any public event, a baseball game for instance, produces massive amounts of plastic cups, plates and cutlery that have been used in some cases for only the seconds it takes to spill down ten ounces of beer before being consigned to a trash barrel.

## Toxic For Every Moment

The cups arrive at the local landfill (they can't be recycled), there to remain intact for hundreds of years, although their slow disintegration begins to release toxins. They began their ignominious journey in an oil field thousands of miles away and were toxic every moment of their existence—from drilling to oceanic transportation, to off-loading at American harbors to manufacture and finally to disposal. Plants that pump out benzene and vinyl chlorides, building blocks for a wide spectrum of plastics, produce 14 percent of U.S. toxic air emissions. Sixteen percent of all industrial accidents—explosions, toxic cloud releases, chemical spills and fires—involve plastic production. Recycling doesn't touch this, but the spills and accidents aren't what are featured in industry ads.

Recycled plastic is a small percentage of what is manufactured and the amount is actually *decreasing* even as recycling increases. In 1993, for instance, 15 billion pounds of plastic were produced from what the industry calls virgin feed stock, but only one billion pounds of that was recycled.

And, the "at least we're doing something" argument doesn't work well here either. The industrial process which reclaims plastic is highly toxic and much of what is collected is shipped overseas, and

Continued on page 31

# Coming Events Building A Movement

## Chicago-May 3 Honoring the Haymarket Martyrs

The U.S. National Park Service has declared Chicago's Haymarket Martyrs' Monument a National Historic Landmark and the Illinois Labor History Society (ILHS) is sponsoring a celebration, Sunday afternoon, May 3. The ceremony will take place at the former Waldheim cemetery now called Forest Home at 863 Desplaines Ave. in Forest Park, Ill. outside of Chicago.

The monument is a tribute to five anarchists, Albert Parsons, August Spies, Adolph Fischer, George Engle and Louis Lingg, who died at the hands of the state of Illinois following a frame-up murder trial in 1887. They were convicted for a bomb thrown during a police riot although none of the accused were ever shown to have been directly connected with the device. Much like the current British Gandalf Defendants (see p. 5), the Haymarket martyrs were held responsible by their writings and utterances for an act committed by someone unknown to them.

Although it seems quite a contradiction to have anarchists honored by a government agency, official designation may be for the best. Old Waldheim Cemetery, resting place of Emma Goldman and other radicals, had fallen on hard times recently. Security was so lax on the grounds that the Monument was vandalized and its elaborate brass trim stolen for scrap.

Leslie Orear, president of the ILHS, said a sculptor and foundry are necessary to restore the missing filigree. He added that security has improved under the site's new owners and he was hopeful a reconstituted statue would be properly guarded.

For information and directions contact the ILHS, 28 E. Jackson, Rm. 1012, Chicago IL 60604; 312-663-4107; [www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs](http://www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs).

## Everywhere-May 16 Global Street Party

People in London and Turku, Finland have proposed Saturday, May 16 as the day for a Global Street Party. These events would coincide with the 1998 G8 meeting in Birmingham, England, where world leaders from the eight largest capitalist economies will make decisions about the future of the planet and its people.

These politicians and corporate vampires, in their ceaseless drive for profit, will then fly to Geneva to celebrate the 50th anniversary of GATT, where they will sign agreements enabling them to wrench more power and control away from local communities and siphon it into their self-appointed dictatorship.

People everywhere are rebelling against these global forces, and mid-May will see countless world-wide protests. A transnational street party has the potential to be a defining moment of resistance. Imagine the kick of taking back your street in the knowledge that all over the world similar acts of defiance are taking place.

Time is short, so please try to respond to this idea as soon as possible. London Reclaim The Streets, PO box 9656, London N4 4NL, UK; 0171-281-4621; [www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/fts.html](http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/fts.html).

## St. Louis-July 17-19 Biotechnology Conference

Several environmental groups are sponsoring the first grassroots gathering on biodevastation and genetic engineering, July 17-19, at Fontbonne College in St. Louis. Organizers say the conference will address the intertwined issues of genetic engineering, patenting of life forms and herbicide-resistant seeds, world trade in genetic material, and the monopolization of food production.

Bringing together major critics of biotechnology such as Indian physicist Vandana Shiva, author Brian Tokar, and Howard Lyman (co-defendant in the Oprah Winfrey case), the conference will host workshops and panels for environmentalists, pure food activists, and farmers.

For more information contact the Gateway Green Alliance at (314) 727-8554 or (314) 772-6463.

## Toronto-Aug. 17-23 Anarchist Gathering Set For August

Toronto anarchists and radical activists are organizing Active Resistance '98, August 17-23, designated as the ten-year anniversary of the Survival Gathering held in that city (see Summer 1988 *FE* for background).

Canada is home to the second-largest community of Nazi war criminals in the world, and Toronto has a disproportionate share of boneheads and fascist propagandists. It also recently witnessed a brutal wave of police killings of people of color in a city which is heavily multi-cultural.

The province of Ontario is rated the third most polluted area in North America, clearcut deforestation is rampant in the Temagami region, and the Darlington nuclear reactor was recently cited for incompetence. Campus occupations have taken place across the province by student activists frustrated with increasingly inaccessible tuition fees, and the Ontario Federation of Labor is poised for the possibility of a province-wide general strike.

The city is ripe for a creative, fun, culturally diverse, queer positive, National-solidarity, pro-feminist, youth and political prisoner-friendly, labor-aligned, anti-poverty, ecologically-minded gathering of anarchist activists taking action against oppression in Toronto, North America, and the world.

Send information requests, organizing

and outreach ideas, workshop topics, fundraising suggestions, contact addresses to: Active Resistance '98 Toronto Planning Crew/ P.O. Box 108 Station P, Toronto, Ont., Canada M5S 2S8; 416-635-2763; [resist62.tao.ca](http://resist62.tao.ca).

## Ft. Benning-Nov. 22 Cross the Line at the SOA

What are you doing Nov. 22? The School of Americas Watch is looking for 1,000 good men and women to help permanently close the U.S. school for torture at Ft. Benning, Georgia. It is dubbed the School of Assassins by activists for train-

## Our Fallen Comrades



### Francisco Rebordosa 1918-1998

With the hope of leaving a fruitful seed, the bodies of the Spanish libertarians are sowing the earth in various continents of the planet. In Montreal, it is our dear Cisco Rebordosa. He was preceded by Enrique Castillos, who dedicated many years of his life to militancy, Alfred Munros (see Fall 1996 *FE*), whose illustrations are well known to readers of our publications, and Alfred Ruiz, a veteran of the anti-Franco struggle in Spain, where he was imprisoned.

When they arrived in Canada in December 1951, the church was very powerful.

Three families faced the precariousness of their new situation when soon after they found a house to rent together, the parish priest appeared at their door to ask why he had not seen them in church. Upon hearing their reply, that they weren't in the habit of attending mass, the priest replied: "If you don't go to church, you won't be very lucky in Canada." Today,

things in that country have changed significantly, and our compañeros are due some credit for that change.

Rebordosa always gave himself fully to the cause with unique dedication. It was he who founded the S.I.A. (Sociedad International Anti-fascista), and it was our Cisco who, with other compañeros organized the Montreal C.N.T. (Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores). He later helped form the Liga Democrática Española in 1960 which published the magazine *Umbral*, profusely illustrated with the drawings of Munros, and organized the well-known anti-Franco protests and demonstrations, denouncing oppression and the death penalty sentences imposed first on

the self-sacrifice, generosity and altruism of our friend has always been shared by his compañera, Carmen. Their home was always open, offering the bread and salt of friendship to those who arrived from various countries, a home where true human solidarity exists, generated by the love of ideas. We possess a great spiritual wealth when we feel ourselves united in a large family of compañeros like Carmen and Francisco.

Today, when the loss of that good

compañero fills us with sorrow and clouds

our eyes, we can only hope to honor his

memory by continuing down the path he

always walked: the path of the Ideal, and

to devote ourselves to that which united us in our youth.

To Carmen, his children Linda and Jazmín, we say: "Our dear Cisco, like our

is imperishable. He will live in us and in those who succeed us, because that

is the only path that leads to human well-being."

Salud Cisco, salud, compañero and

brother, salud, salud.

—Federico Arcos

ing 60,000 Latin American soldiers who return home to murder, torture, rape and intimidate the poor and those working for the rights of the poor.

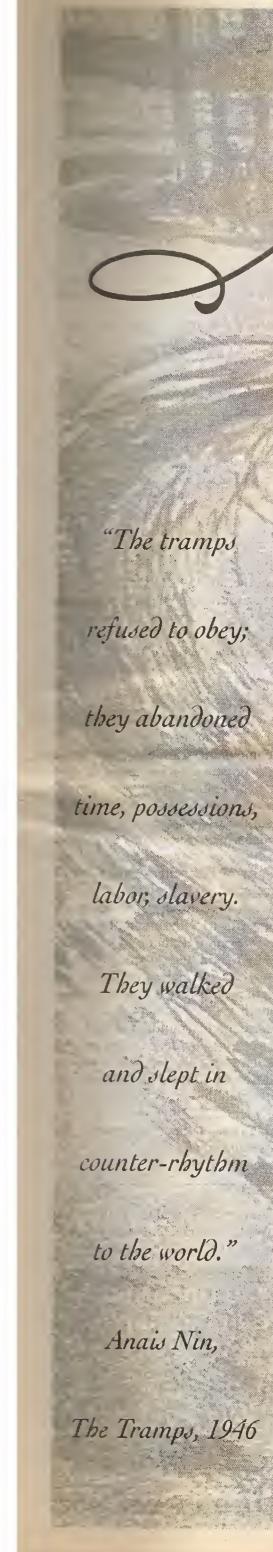
Last November 16, 2000 people demonstrated at Ft. Benning demanding the facility be closed. 601 people were arrested who "crossed the line" drawn by the cops and MPs at the base entrance. First-time offenders were given a letter barring them from the premises for a year. Repeat offenders, thirty in all, were given jail sentences for trespassing.

The alma mater of such U.S.-trained grotesque torturers as Salvador's Robert "Blowtorch Bob" d'Aubisson must be shut

down. Contact SOA Watch, 1719 Irving St. NW, Washington DC 20010 and pledge to "cross the line" this November.

## If You Received A Sample Copy

If you are prisoner or GI you must write back to let us know you want a free subscription. Civilians, please fill out the subscription blank in the back of this issue if you want future editions.



# ANARCHY, NEO-IMPRESSIONISM, & UTOPIA

## THE WANDERING OF HUMANITY

By Allan Antliff

Anais Nin's encounter with the homeless wanderers of her day—the tramps of Paris, "counter-rhythm to the world" — reminds me of an enduring duality in anarchism. We stand at one remove from capitalism, attempting in our own way to live in a degraded world in spite of it. In the quest to realize our ideals many of us have joined the ranks of such rebels, who subsist on capital's margins.

Recently someone at Detroit's Trumbullplex spoke to me of wandering, riding the rails across the continent. Others travelled too—punks and tramps who gave barely a passing nod were comrades in a shared adventure that moved from roadside campouts to the squats and info shops of the cities. He found his community there, traced out among those on the margins of everyday life, beyond capitalism's jailed society of obedience, constraint, and self-negation. When I met him he and a companion were preparing to travel again; this time to Chiapas, Mexico. Unknown to most anarchists wandering too has an important history within our movement. In this essay I've set out to recover that history and, hopefully, to give these anarchist travellers a sense of the continuity of rebellion animating their lives.

Let us return to Europe and an earlier time, toward the end of the 19th century. Following the fall of the Paris Commune in 1871 successive Republican governments presided over an explosive expansion of French industrial capitalism which eroded older forms of production and community life. The capitalist juggernaut was made possible thanks to a new infrastructure of railroads and roads which penetrated the countryside, bringing economic transformation to hitherto relatively untouched areas.<sup>(1)</sup> In villages, towns, and hamlets, craftsmen were displaced by cheap goods mass-produced in factories. Small-scale farms geared to the material needs and ecological capacities of the local community were undermined by imported produce from abroad and the reconfiguration of agricultural production on a large-scale, export-oriented basis. This process was augmented by a great



*The Wanderers, 1897*

depression that lasted from 1873 to 1896. Then an economy in crisis forced artisans and peasants into debt, and from there to the mines, factories, mills, and urban centers that fed the industrial capitalist monolith.<sup>(2)</sup>

Roger Magraw writes that as the old skills and rural communities died, uprooted, alienated, deskilled workers sunk into drink, crime, and domestic violence.<sup>(3)</sup> But many of the displaced refused to be victims. They entered into a state of revolt against encroaching capitalist servitude; and their revolt found articulation in an anarchist critique of marginalization and the cruel existence of the dispossessed.

Nowhere was this critique more clearly encapsulated than in the art of the Belgian and French Neo-impressionists, a group of artist-revolutionaries whose paintings and graphic contributions to journals such as *Le Père Pinard*, *L'Endebors*, *La Plume*,



*The Coal Gleaners of Liège, 1891*

*L'Assiette Au Beurre*, and *Les Temps Nouveaux* played a key agitational role in the anarchist movement.<sup>54</sup>

Take, for example, *The Wanderers* (1897), a lithograph produced by the Neo-impressionist Théo Van Rysselberghé for an album of prints issued by *Les Temps Nouveaux*. Van Rysselberghé took his title, "The Wanderers," from a poem of the same name by the anarchist playwright Emile Verhaeren. Beneath the print was a passage from Verhaeren's poem which reads:

"Thus the poor people cart misery for great distances over the plains of the earth . . ."

Who are Van Rysselberghé's dispossessed? In the late 1880s and early 1890s the workers of Belgium repeatedly rose up in a series of mass strikes, riots, and violent clashes with the police and army. The first such incident erupted in the industrial city of Liège, where an anarchist commemoration of the Paris Commune led to full-scale rioting that spread throughout the country's industrial mining region.<sup>55</sup> We can better grasp the desperation of the Liège region's anarchists through photos and drawings of their living hell—the "prosperous" towns where workers were reduced to combing slag heaps for bits of coal after hours. Men, women, and children worked ten to thirteen hour days, six days a week, in the mines and mills of Belgium. They were paid at or below subsistence level; and if there was no work, they starved.<sup>56</sup>

Van Rysselberghé's *Wanderers* are working-class refugees displaced by poverty, the police, and the army. In the 1890s thousands of such families were forced onto the roads of Belgium by grinding unemployment, lockouts, or vicious acts of government suppression. "They cart their misery for great distances," Verhaeren wrote. Enraged at the injustice, Van Rysselberghé depicted these rebels in their most abject moment of defeat, condemned to wandering without end in a world ruled by an economic system that "capitalizes everything, assimilates everything, and makes it its own."<sup>57</sup>

Where might they have wandered? Perhaps to the city, to join the despairing multitudes of unemployed and underemployed. Henri Lebasque's lithograph, *Provocation* (1900), bears testimony to the kind of marginal life awaiting them there, in the great marketplaces of capital. This print was also distributed by *Les Temps Nouveaux*.

*Provocation* is a stark critique of starvation in the face of capitalism's "plenitude," the provocation being the commodification of bread, humanity's most basic sustenance. A child stands weak and listless, staring at loaves of bread displayed in a brightly-lit shop window. Business prospers while the child starves. Similar testimony to the inhumane idiocy of capitalism is captured in a drawing by Georges Bradberry for *Les Temps Nouveaux*'s July, 1907 issue. "The starving man," Bradberry writes, "envies the satiated beasts!" And so a rural outcast stands mute

by a field of fattened cows; valueless, penniless, and "worthless."

While some anarchists focused on the dispossessed's plight, others gave tangible form to the oppression of work in the crucible of capitalist modernity. In 1889 the Neo-impressionist Camille Pissarro created a small booklet, entitled *Social Turpitudes*, which depicted the drudgery of emergent forms of urban wage labor. Among them is a depiction of seamstresses slaving under the watchful eye of a supervisor. They hunch over piecework in a debtors' prison, where they have been condemned by their poverty to endless, repetitious tasks. Pissarro also showed the brutalization of day-laborers. An illustration for the May, 1893 issue of *La Plume*, for example, depicts the backbreaking drudgery of stevedores who spent their lives — when they could obtain work — shoveling and hauling coal.



*Provocation*  
*Provocation, 1900*

Anarchists also pointed to different possibilities, possibilities they found latent in Europe's besieged pre-capitalist ways of life. Here critique was wed to utopia, and the condition of wandering took on new meaning.

*They saw their painterly technique as an analogue for the harmony in freedom that could unite humanity and, in turn, reconcile us with nature.*



*Social Turpitude, 1889*

Thus far I have discussed the anarchists' damning criticism of industrial capitalist labor and the injustice of working-class destitution. However this was not the sum total of their critique. Anarchists also pointed to different possibilities, possibilities they found latent in Europe's besieged pre-capitalist ways of life. Here critique was wed to utopia, and the condition of wandering took on new meaning.

The latter theme emerges in a second depiction of wandering by the Neo-impressionist Maximilien Luce, entitled *Factory Smokestacks, Couillet* (1898-99). Luce was an uncompromising working-class militant who was briefly imprisoned for his anarchist activities in 1894. Towards the end of the 1890s he travelled through northern France and Belgium recording his impressions of the oppressive mining towns and factories.<sup>60</sup> An exhibition of his paintings held in 1891 led one anarchist art critic to write of "the bleeding soul of the people, the life of the multitudes anguished and inflamed by suffering and bitterness."<sup>61</sup>



*Factory Smokestacks, Couillet, 1898-99*

*Factory Smokestacks* is dominated by the grim industrial capitalist inferno of Couillet, where treeless streets of rooming houses disgorged workers daily into the hellish maw of the mills. But in the corner of the painting a man and boy walk away from the entrapment of this inferno. Their destination is unnamed; their purpose, undetermined. They might be setting out on a journey, or perhaps they seek momentary respite from the grey, polluted environment they leave behind. In any event, they are passing from one world to another—the rhythm of capital gives way to the rhythm of nature.

Luce and the Neo-impressionists were fully aware of the violence emergent capitalism unleashed on nature's rhythms and the crippling contortions its industries imposed on humanity. They read the writings of Elisée Reclus and Peter Kropotkin, who both condemned the disequilibrium of industrial capitalism as a violation of harmonious social relations and, ultimately, of humanity's relationship to the earth. Writing in 1864 Reclus observed that the capitalist "pillages the earth; he exploits it violently and fails to restore its riches, in the end rendering it uninhabitable. The truly civilized man understands that his interest is bound up with the interest of everyone and with that of nature."<sup>62</sup>

Turn-of-the-century anarchists revolved in the name of a harmonious utopia in which property would be held in common and social and ecological conflict would be banished. Harmony entailed a freedom that respected and nurtured differences while sustaining the good of the whole. Just as mutual aid undergirded the diverse interrelatedness of plants, insects, and animals, so humanity could realize a greater diversity through cooperation.<sup>63</sup> However, this farsighted and demanding vision ran against the grain of history. Far easier and more "sensible" to follow Marxism, which glorified in the myth that the industrial capitalist system could produce unending wealth, and had only to be harnessed for the social good of all.<sup>64</sup>

Where could the anarchist utopia find a sure footing in the world? In the first instance, among other anarchists. Reclus wrote of our obligation "to free ourselves personally from all preconceived or imposed ideas, and gradually group around ourselves comrades who live and act in the same fashion." Such "small and intelligent societies," he argued, could form the basis of a greater harmonious social order.<sup>65</sup>

However the growing community of anarchists was not the sole social force working against the industrial capitalist Leviathan. Reclus and others looked to the surviving patterns of communal existence among the peasantry, where the traces of a different social rhythm still prevailed. Pissarro's great Neo-impressionist paintings, such as *Harvesting Apples* of 1889, capture the cadence of this life, where work was as yet untouched by the regulatory regime of capitalized production. These workers take their time. They pause to chat amongst themselves and their activity is voluntary and cooperative. Here humanity transforms the world through cultivation, rather than destruction.

Thus, everyday life approaches a condition of harmony akin to anarchism—or so the anarchist writer and critic Octave Mirbeau thought. Mirbeau wrote that Pissarro's canvases depict a world animated by "the ideal," where the cities of capital, "booming as they may be, are no more perceptible, having no more planetary importance, behind the fold of terrain that hides them, than the lark's nest in the bottom of a furrow."<sup>66</sup> Without a doubt these paintings are utopian. We know that Pissarro and other anarchist artists also depicted the brutalization of landless peasant laborers on the large capitalized farms of rural France. However the Neo-impressionists were equally enthralled by the life-cycle they encountered in Europe's small hamlets and landholdings, where self-sufficiency and pre-capitalist ways still persisted.

In fact, Neo-impressionism's technique was suffused with anarchist utopianism. The Neo-impressionists applied unique and discrete colors on the canvas—the small dots of paint that give these paintings their soft glow and shimmering radiance—according to scientific principles of vision, so as to produce an overall harmonious effect. They saw their painterly technique as an analogue for the harmony in freedom that could unite humanity and, in turn, reconcile us with nature. Robyn Sue Roslak writes that the visual synthesis of the neo-impressionist canvas reflected

..The progressive process through which Harmony and Variety in Unity (terms which defined the ideal anarchist social structure) were achieved. These, of course, were the very terms which the Neo-impressionists and their critics used to describe Neo-impressionist painting. There, individual spots of paint, akin to the human individuals in anarcho-communist social theory, are amassed to form

unified, harmonious, synthetic compositions, which appear as such because of the way in which the discrete colors are scientifically applied to compliment one another while preserving their own, unique character.

Thus the Neo-impressionists fused utopia with reality, giving their ideals a material presence in the form of social critiques on canvas that pointed toward an anarchic future.

Of course this future could not be achieved without revolution. And the anarchists knew that among the masses of displaced and dispossessed workers condemned to wandering by a pitiless capitalist order, the memory of revolts and the hope of revolution remained. In fact, many anarchist militants came from the ranks of these working class itinerants, who played a key role in the movement as they travelled from place to place spreading revolutionary ideas through pamphlets, songs, and conversations. In his turn-of-the-century account of French anarchism, called *The Anarchist Peril*, Félix Dubois wrote of one such *trimardeur* (vagabond, tramp), nicknamed "The Sot," who lived "on the highway." He was one of many who had "turned his back on a corrupt society" to become "a wandering and amiable bohemian" in the service of the anarchist idea.<sup>16</sup>

In 1896 the Neo-impressionist Henri-Edmond Cross paid homage to one such anarchist in an illustration issued by *Les Temps Nouveaux*. Copies of this print may well have circulated the length and breadth of France and beyond. Cross entitled his print, *The Wanderer*.

*The Wanderer* sits alone, caught up by a visionary revelry. Behind him is the vision itself. The revolution has won and workers are throwing the insignia of capitalist oppression—flags and other symbols of authority—into a raging bonfire. These workers, and the wanderer himself, are surrounded by a beautiful Neo-impressionist landscape. Harmony in freedom has transformed the anarchist "utopia" into reality.

Which brings me again to our present-day wandering. Anarchists such as Cross' *Wanderer* were outcasts, but they also were free. Their freedom resided in a day-to-day life apart from capital and the revolutionary vision they propagated to the wretched workers encountered along the way. Like Nin's tramps they too abandoned time, possessions, labor, and slavery in a refusal to obey. And like them they existed in counter-rhythm to a world in which their ideals were deemed valueless. But anarchism's wanderers were not capital's victims. They struggled for a better world—just like their counterparts do today, as they pass from Detroit to Chiapas, and a thousand places in between.

#### Notes

1. Roger Magraw *A History of the French Working Class: Workers and the Bourgeois Republic, 1871-1939* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 5-7. Similarly, the capitalists of North America have dreamed up a network of "super-highways" intended to link up the non-unionized and impoverished production centers of Mexico to Northern consumption points. See "NAFTA Superhighways Threaten North America," *Earth First!* (September-October, 1997): 17-20.
2. *Ibid.* 5.
3. *Ibid.* 11.
4. All these journals were anarchist publications.
5. Stephen H. Goddard *Les XX and the Belgian Avant-Garde* (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1992), 24.
6. *Ibid.* 56; 69-70; notes 6, 7. Thus turn-of-the-century "free trade" functioned as an tool of impoverishment, much as it does under the current NAFTA agreement in which North America's workers "compete" with imports from the industrial gulags of Mexico and Mexican peasant farmers "compete" with US and Canadian corporate agro-businesses.
7. Jacques Camatte, "The Wandering of Humanity," *The World We Must Leave* (New York: Autonomedia, 1995), 39.
8. Richard D. Sonn *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 145.
9. Georges Darien, "Maximilien Luce," *La Plume* LVII (1891): 300.
10. Elisée Reclus, "Du Sentiment de la nature dans les sociétés modernes," *La Revue des deux mondes*, 1 (December, 1864): 763. Cited in Marie Fleming *The Geography of Freedom* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988), 114.
11. See Peter Kropotkin *Mutual Aid* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988).



*Harvesting Apples, 1889*

12. For the definitive critique of Marxism's "mirroring" of industrial capitalism's workings see Jean Baudrillard *The Mirror of Production* (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975).

13. Reclus to Clara Koettitz, 12 April 1895. Cited in Fleming, *The Geography of Freedom*, 175.

14. Octave Mirbeau, "Camille Pissarro," *L'Art dans les deux mondes* 8 (10 January, 1891): 84. Cited in Martha Ward Pissarro *Neo-impressionism and the Spaces of the Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 181.

15. Robyn Sue Roslak *Scientific Aesthetics and the Aestheticized Earth: the Parallel Vision of the Neo-Impressionist landscape and Anarcho-Communist Social Theory* (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1987), 204. Roslak's is by far and away the best study of Neo-impressionism to date.

16. Félix Dubois *The Anarchist Peril* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894), 82.



*The Wanderer, 1896*



# Remembering Castoriadis & Bahro

Bahro and Castoriadis were important voices in the breakup of traditional leftism and the emergence of new forms of radicalism.

In December 1997 two writers died who influenced our perspective—Rudolf Bahro and Cornelius Castoriadis, both former Marxists capable of valuable insights as well as highly questionable positions. Bahro and Castoriadis were original thinkers, nevertheless, and deserve recognition as important voices in the breakup of traditional leftism and the emergence of new forms of radicalism.

#### Cornelius Castoriadis (1922-1997)

In the early to mid-1970s, the essays of Castoriadis (written under several pseudonyms including the most famous among radical and ultra-left readers, Paul Cardan) played a significant role in our political transformation from new/leftism to anarcho-communism and beyond. His early works, many of them published in English by the London Solidarity group, found their way to the *Fifth Estate* office and, along with the work of Jacques Camatte, situationist theory, and other ultra-left and anarchist materials (often brought to our attention by Fredy Perlman), became the source of many lively discussions and debates that pushed us all the way to the left and eventually off the spectrum altogether. Such essays as "The Fate of Marxism," "History & Revolution," and "Redefining Revolution" contributed to our clarifying the outlines of what Castoriadis called "the ruin of classical marxism" and the "reconstruction of revolutionary theory... [as] a permanent challenge."

We continued to read his work from time to time in the pages of *Telos* during the late 1970s and early 1980s, but were eventually dismayed to read him argue in his essay, "Facing the War," in the Winter 1980-81 issue, during the height of grassroots Western European and U.S. resistance to growing nuclear war preparations, that Russia had become "the primary world military power with all that presupposes industrially and technologically...." This meant that "Europe's only protection still rests in the ICBM silos and Polaris submarines of the U.S." (His convoluted defense of the deployment of Pershing and cruise missiles, based on the ludicrous assumption of Russian military superiority, was nevertheless mixed into a very interesting and persuasive discussion of Soviet society.)

To our relief, Castoriadis did not become merely another ex-leftist neo-conservative defender of the Empire. Though we never read him systematically, we continued to run across his provocative work. Whatever differences we had with his outlook, we found stimulating and sometimes extremely valuable his dazzling mix of modern insight and classical erudition. Castoriadis' critique of marxist pseudoscientific rationalism and its ideology of progress, his expanded notion of the idea of classes and hierarchic societies, his image of a "pyramid" mass society generated by bureaucratic state capitalism both East and West, and his discussions of autonomous and heteronomous societies have found their way indirectly and di-

rectly into what one might loosely call a *Fifth Estate* point of view.

In the best obituary we've seen so far of Castoriadis, in the English anarchist magazine *Freedom*, "NW" writes that he eventually turned "increasingly to linguistics and mathematics, ancient history and pure philosophy." In fact, Castoriadis' discussions of ancient societies, though sometimes obscure, were striking and invigorating. As the *Freedom* obit puts it, Castoriadis "developed an idiosyncratic humanistic position which emphasized the part played by individual imagination and creative culture in human affairs and which included a remarkable 'ethic of mortality,' arguing that the absence of any kind of divinity above humanity and of any kind of existence after death made it all the more important to accept a tragic sense of both private and public life and to concentrate on the development of autonomous individuals in an autonomous society here and now."

More recent articles (for example, "The Greek and the Modern Political Imaginary," in the Fall 1993 issue of *Salmagundi*) inspired discussion just as the articles written twenty years before had—discussions which may not have led to a radical new turn, but which have planted seeds for future study, reflection and conversation. As the *Freedom* writer comments, Castoriadis "helped to destroy some of the most harmful myths of our time"; the work he did to propose a new world to replace them now deserves more attention.

#### Rudolf Bahro (1935-1997)

Rudolf Bahro's book *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (London, 1979), a young administrator's proposal for the reform of the Stalinist bureaucracy, landed him in jail in East Germany when it was published in the West. Bahro's *Alternative*, which simultaneously demystified Bolshevism and defended its allegedly progressive, revolutionary role and the necessity of a one-party state, relied on a Maoist-influenced idea of cultural revolution and argued for a kind of pedagogic dictatorship to work in the objective interests of the people. Thus, as Andrew Arato surmised (in a review in the Summer 1981 *Telos* of a 1980 collection of essays edited by Ulf Wolter, *Rudolf Bahro: Critical Responses*), "it is impossible to neatly separate out the emancipatory... and authoritarian... features of Bahro's work."

In fact, the "antinomies" detected by Arato reflected a tension in Bahro's thinking between egalitarian and authoritarian impulses that would remain unresolved. This tension was rendered more complex by Bahro's Christian sensibility (as a socialist dissident he had already railed against the bureaucracy as a corrupted church and called for a kind of reformation), a sensibility which apparently deepened by his Bible study during his time in prison. Bahro's religious metaphors extended, at times with compelling, seminal significance, other times with highly problematic results, into his dissident green critique of industrialism.

Expelled from East Germany to the West in 1980, Bahro fulfilled no one's expectations—neither Cold Warriors nor Western Marxists—of the exile-dissident, choosing instead to explore new terrain and to add dramatically original and provocative insights to the emerging green movement. E.P. Thompson remarked in his preface to the English edition of Bahro's *Socialism and Survival* (1982) that upon arriving in the West Bahro "hit the ground running, but running in his own direction." Lacking any bitterness toward the East, and noticing in any case the same malaise in the West, Bahro rejected both sides, and began to critique the whole structure and content of industrial civilization with a "prophetic sense of urgency" and an openness toward the utopian mode. Thompson also noted the echoes of William Morris in *The Alternative*. (Morris was a forerunner of green-socialist utopianism and what one might in retrospect describe as nascent social ecological, critical-luddite thought.)

Bahro wrote (in *Socialism and Survival*) that he was forced to reexamine his views, particularly in light of the ecological crisis, "in which all the contradictions of the prevailing mode of production and way of life, all the dangers of the world situation, intersect and coalesce...." Bahro began to challenge the ideology of progress itself. "The very idea of progress must be interpreted in a completely new way," he wrote. "The per capita consumption of raw materials and energy, the per capita production of steel and cement that are added in all the statistics as criteria of progress, are typical criteria of a progress that is totally alienated." The only "progress" worth talking about was a "progress in human emancipation," and that required the abolition of industrial capitalism, in both small and large steps. "We must gradually paralyse everything that goes in the old direction," he wrote in 1981: "military installations and motorways, nuclear power stations and airports, chemical factories and big hospitals, supermarkets and education works."

Bahro argued the need for a radical conversion reminiscent of the global reorientation of values and lifeways Lewis Mumford had called for in the 1970s. "Let us consider how we can feed ourselves, keep warm, clothe ourselves, educate ourselves and keep ourselves healthy independent of the Great Machine," Bahro declared. "Let us begin to work at this before the Great Machine has completely regulated us, concreted us over, poisoned us, asphyxiated us and sooner or later subjected us to total nuclear annihilation."

Eventually Bahro broke with the Green Party, arguing (in work done between 1982-1985 translated and gathered into an English edition, *Building the Green Movement*) that the German ecology-peace party, by involving itself in the political administration of the nation-state, could "help bring about the final imperial restoration of the country." He publicly resigned in 1985, declaring that "the party is a counter-productive tool," and that "the given political space is a trap into which

life energy disappears, indeed, where it is rededicated to the spiral of death."

Bahro started out as a loyal oppositionist of the East German Communist Party, calling for its reform, believing in the necessity of the leading, conscious minority, but ended by turning his back on all parties and party politics, though not on the process of radical inquiry, association and action. But he did not resolve the problem of authority, and toward the end of his life was proposing increasingly absurd and disturbing ideas—for example, ecological theocracy and the need to "redeem Hitler" and "liberate [the] brown parts" in the German character. (See Staudenmaier and Biehl, *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience*, as well as my Fall 1997 FE review, "Swamp Fever, Primitivism & the 'Ideological Vortex'" for discussion of Bahro's fascist utterances.) This madness apparently had its roots in the original, unresolved authoritarianism of his early work, combined perhaps with his failure to make balanced use of insights from archaic religious traditions (evidenced by at least one bizarre episode along the way—his fascination with the Bhagwan Rajneesh cult in the mid-1980s).

Bahro's decline was unfortunate because his contribution, however erratic, was remarkable. He suffered cancer the last few years of his life (making him possibly one of millions of victims of industrial contamination), and one wonders if his illness did not exacerbate his theoretical breakdown. But such speculation is not reasonable analysis, and whatever the circumstances one must take responsibility for what one writes; Bahro's last writings were shameful and disappointing.

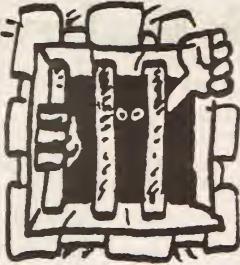
Bahro's important insights into the extermist system are worth remembering nevertheless; they were compelling in part because they came from an ex-marxist who had learned many of the valuable lessons offered by marxist anti-capitalism, but who superseded that perspective toward a deeper notion of radical transformation, even if ultimately his project was marred by failure and folly. At his best, he was a strikingly original voice of conscience in opposition to the global "Great Machine."

"We must live differently in order to survive!" he warned the peace movement in the early 1980s. That task still lies before us, more imperative than ever.

—David Watson

**FE Note:** The Castoriadis obituary appeared in the Feb. 7, 1998 *Freedom* (Angel Alley, 848 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QZ UK). The Freedom Bookshop (same address) carries his pamphlets.

"Who Can Stop the Apocalypse?"—an excerpt from Bahro's *Socialism and Survival*—appeared in a 12-page, FE 1990 Earth Day Special, available through our book service free with book orders, or for postage (send \$1.24 for a pound's worth), or \$1 postage and handling for a single copy.



## Polish anarchists free in Chechnya

A few days before Christmas, five Poles were kidnapped in Chechnya, where they were with a convoy of humanitarian aid (food, medicines, clothes). Two of the five are members of the Polish Anarchist Federation (FA). These are Marek Kurzyniec—a veteran FA activist, and Krzysztof Galinski—one of the founders of the anarchist magazine Mac Pariadka ("Mother of Order"). The other hostages are Paweł Chojnicki and Pavel Thiel, former members of the peace-organization W&P (Freedom and Peace—one of the predecessors to FA), and the journalist Dominik Piaskowski.

The van of the hostages was found 40 kilometers west of Grozny with its two front tires shot out. They were attacked by 15 people. Two Chechen bodyguards (friends of one of the hostages) were with them who shot two of the attackers.

One of the theories (for informational purposes only—we take no position) is that the Russian secret services hired Chechen criminals to do the kidnapping. They can then blame the Chechens—that they can't be trusted, are unstable and dangerous—therefore giving a pretext for a Russian crackdown. Poles and Chechens have good relations—they have a shared interest in forming a bloc against their colonizers. Russians might have hoped this crime would strain relations between the two countries.

Marek Kurzyniec and Krzysztof Galinski became well known in Chechnya when they were organizing convoys of humanitarian aid to the country during the war with Russia. Three convoys organized with the help of the Anarchist Federation were the only ones which reached the areas of fighting. All other convoys organized by the UN were stopped by the Russians and their cargo was sold on the black market. The Polish Anarchist Federation also organized demonstrations at Russian consulates in Poland, and gathered signatures for a petition to protest the imperialist policies of the Russian government.

**Update:** News reached us that our Polish comrades have been freed! A big thanks to everyone who contacted Chechen representatives around the world and helped spread the news about the hostages.



# НА ГОГОЛЕВСКОМ БУЛЬВАРЕ On Gogol Boulevard

## Demonstrations against the Pope in Poland and the Czech Republic

### Without Church Dogma to the 21 Century!

This was the motto of the event which took place during the Pope's visit in Wroclaw in Poland and was organized by the Liberty Forum. On the first day there was a seminar on the threat to human freedom caused by the doctrine and activity of the Catholic Church. A lot of people showed up for this conference, not only punks but mostly normal people, and it got some coverage in the press. There was also a small happening made by Anarcho-Feminists. The conference was slightly disturbed by a couple of boneheads, but nothing happened.

However, the demonstration planned for the following day was not possible for several reasons. First of all it turned out that nazis had organized a counter-demo at the same spot as the anarchists were planning theirs. There were about 200-250 of them, and not just kids, but really grown dickheads. They were shouting "All true Poles love the Holy Father." Because there were only 30 anarchists, and they didn't feel suicidal at the moment, the demo didn't take place. Anyway, the image of fascist salutations to the pope riding by sent the right message even without anarchists present.

### Statement by the organizers:

The Liberty Forum organizes and is open to cooperation with all groups, social circles and individuals, which act for freedom, tolerance and cultural variety. The Liberty Forum declares for open society and peaceful coexistence of all outlooks on life. We are against every kind of domination of one cultural, political or religious option. With anxiety we are observing authoritarian (nationalist and clerical) tendencies in Polish society.

The action "Without Church Dogma to the 21 Century!" is our protest against clerical repression in social life and religious dictatorship which is going to be imposed by the Church and political circles connected with it.

We are expecting support and help from everybody who prefers critical intellect and human freedom to the Church dogma.

Let our united resistance against authoritarianism destroy state borders and national divisions!

### Actions against the Pope in Prague

The Czech Republic also had local anarchist actions against the Pope. A group of 30-40 members of the Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation demonstrated on one of the main squares in Prague against the Pope's visit. They distributed several hundreds of leaflets, based upon a famous Andre Breton surrealist manifesto describing burning churches during the anarchist uprisings in Spain. A planned rally through the City had been banned by the local authorities and some 100 heavily armed riot-police pigs were present. A group of anarchists with a red-and-black flag gave interviews to numerous journalists, and after some 30 minutes the meeting was ended to avoid a skirmish with the riot police.

### The project FREE WROCLAW

After the decline of Communism in Poland, people got confused. Some of them, especially the young, believed in capitalism, free markets and western culture, some started believing that the improvement of the situation is possible only by realizing conservative and nationalistic values. But most people in Poland are still passive and do not believe in the possibility of improving their lives. They live day in and day out and do not want to think about their future. Only a very few young people want to do something—most of them are passive and indifferent like the rest of society.

In order to create a place for active people, we want to set up a center so people can talk, organize themselves to solve their own problems and discuss questions. We would like to establish an alternative book shop for exchanging ideas and information, a place where people can meet, drink coffee, tea or have a beer. The project FREE WROCLAW would give jobs to the young unemployed. It would be a non-profit organization and political circles connected with it.

If we manage to establish our goals, FREE WROCLAW would be the first and the only type of organization of its kind in Poland.

Unfortunately it is very difficult to realize our goal when money is extremely difficult to come by for us average people. Therefore we would like to ask for your help. Every kind of help (money—even a small sum, computer equipment and so on) is useful to us.

If you are interested in our activity and want to help us or receive additional information about us please write to:

Stowarzyszenie RUCH  
P.O. BOX 2319  
50-958 WROCLAW 47, POLAND

### OUR ACCOUNT:

Powszechna Kasa Oszczędności  
Bank Państwowy, IV Oddział we  
Wrocławiu  
RUCH-Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz  
Społeczeństwa Antyautorytarnego  
93549-42462-132

## Riots in Poland

The 10th of January, riots broke out in Slupsk, a Polish city near the seaside. Thousands of young people fought the police with stones and molotovs, and made barricades on the streets. Over 30 cops were reportedly injured, while two dozen police cars were wrecked (four of them totally burned), and two police stations were attacked. About 100 persons were arrested (15-18 years old).

The reason was the murder of a 13-year-old basketball fan by a policeman. The kid received a blow to his head with a massive club while he was running from the police forces attacking a group of fans. The cops then prevented passers-by from helping the kid, and he died.

The riots started with a demonstration in front of the police station where people shouted "Death for killers!" "Police: Gestapo!" "We want justice!" The police used teargas to disperse the crowd, and beat people indiscriminately, including innocent bystanders.



## About On Gogol Boulevard

This section is produced for the *Fifth Estate* by Neither East Nor West; a New York City group linking alternative oppositions in the East and West, and printing news and documents unavailable in the corporate and "left" media. Our title refers to Moscow's Gogol Boulevard, a favorite hangout of Soviet-era counterculture youth dissidents, artists, and peace and human rights activists.

We encourage all those involved in "Neither East Nor West"-type activity to regularly contribute to this section. Please address letters, reports, documents, debates, graphics, photos, etc. directly to OGB.

This is not a section for anarchists only. We are interested in promoting freedom, workers rights, women's, minority and gay rights, environmental, self-determination and anti-militarist issues — any struggle pursuing paths outside the capitalist and state bureaucratic models.

Address correspondence to:  
OGB/NENW, 528 Fifth St.  
Brooklyn, NY 11215, USA  
tel: 1-718-499-7720  
email: BobNenvOgb@aol.com  
web: //flag.blackened.net/agony

## Anarchism in Estonia

M.A.L. (Estonian Anarchist Movement) is the movement of Estonian anarchists. It does not have a list of members and a membership fee. M.A.L. can not be responsible for the acts of anarchists who would say they are members of M.A.L. The purpose of M.A.L. is to be an info-agency and facilitate contacts with foreign anarchists or other revolutionary persons or organizations.

WHAT DOES ANARCHY MEAN TO M.A.L.? The word "anarchy" comes of Greek "an arche" (without power). Accordingly mankind is able to exist without laws and a state machine, without everything which would restrict the personal independence. Anarchy does not mean disorder or chaos. It is the conscience which would replace the laws of state.

IS ANARCHY POSSIBLE? M.A.L. does not think it is possible. It will always be the ideal. The perfect world in the name of which we are fighting. The more important thing is the struggle which lifts up the life. To be an anarchist is the style of life.

HOW TO STRUGGLE? Must we organize many acts of terrorism to kill as much as possible non-anarchists? Or must we convince people? Or must we go to live into a forest to be away from the pernicious influence of society? It is the business of the anarchist because here is not one variety.

### CONTACT ADDRESSES:

MAL (Estonian Anarchist Movement) Vilja 8a-55, EE-2710 VORU, ESTONIA  
EDL (Estonian Democratic League) Sutiste 34-6, EE-0034 Tallinn, ESTONIA  
RED EMMA (anarcho feminists) Box 449 Tartu sjk, EE-2400, ESTONIA  
ANL (Anarcho Nudist League) Box 449 Tartu sjk, EE-2400, ESTONIA  
AKF (Anarcho Communist Federation) Box 449 Tartu sjk, EE-2400, ESTONIA



## Do the Kurdish People need a State?

It is our purpose to briefly shed some light on the situation in Kurdistan and to confront the crocodile tears which the capitalists and their media have been crying over Kurdistan.

Kurdistan is a land in which the Kurdish people live in a feudal, capitalist system, where the workers, especially women and children suffer from poverty, abuse and oppression at the hands of those in power such as the Kurdish parties (the Kurdish Democratic Party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) and from the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) who are doing for Kurdish freedom what Yasser Arafat (national liberation hero for the last 20 years) has done for the poor Palestinian population.

After the Iranians were forced by the soldiers' uprising and by the poor population to leave southern Kurdistan and Iranian Kurdistan in March '91, for a brief period these people, united against the government, felt their own power and demonstrated to the world what kind of tempest can be brought forth when the lower strata of society ignite in revolt.

In order to crush and strangle the insurrection as soon as possible, the Iranian government assassins, with the help of allied troops present in the area, formed a holy alliance against the revolt to instill law and order in southern Iraq, massacring unarmed people just like at the Paris Commune.

Meanwhile in Kurdistan, the Kurdish parties, in the name of independent Kurdistan, supported by local landowners, merchants and shopkeepers who all control the movement of the market, installed themselves as the new heads of Kurdistan, crushing all those who question their authority with an iron fist, just like any other authority in the world.

Of course, as anarchists, none of this surprises us; we clearly see a class conflict, we see that all governments mean violence, the murder and theft from the poor working population.

The Left (among which are idiots and those who are simply confused in the head) have their heads filled up with Leninist ideology; they spend their time criticizing some sector of the government which doesn't serve the working

class well.

Just like it's true that you can't expect a dog to talk or sing for it can only bark, we can only expect the state to act oppressively as it has done throughout history.

Therefore we're saying that it's a big lie, an inexcusable lie, to say to the world through the mass media that the majority of the Kurdish population is suffering because of a lack of authority, because of the lack of a Kurdish state. The truth is that the poor population of Kurdistan is suffering just like the working class in the rest of the world; in many ways this is caused by the brutal force of the capitalist system and its authority.

It is our task as anarchists to tell workers, teachers and students about the position of labor in Kurdistan, not to be so stupid as to just change leaders from Turks to Kurds, from Persians to Kurds, from Arabs to Kurds. We have to learn the lessons of our history and the history of the working class and that the solution is anarcho-communist revolution. This is an enormous, bloody event which needs to be prepared illegally, and must be international, otherwise it is a waste of energy.

The flame of revolt is igniting in the hearts and consciousness of the Turkish, Persian and Arab workers, with students and soldiers who want an end to the power of the war machine, the power of poverty and the power of money.

Our mission is to destroy authority, not to reincarnate it in the name of Kurdistan. Kurdistan and the rest of the world should cultivate life without the state.

Long live the Kurdish language and music!

Long live the spirit of revolutionary anarcho-communism in the Middle East and the rest of the world!

Our objective is to abolish religion, the State, racism and money.

—Kurdish Anarchists  
(from *Gernimal* #71/72. Translation by Laurc A.)

## No more Chernobyls!

Veselka is the name of an international anti-nuclear initiative to stop the construction of a nuclear power plant in Belarus.

We are all opposed to the development of nuclear power and find it particularly disturbing and idiotic that authorities would consider building a plant so close to the site of the Chernobyl disaster. The development of this project is being kept quite secret by the Lukashenko government and attempts to oppose it have even resulted in attempted murder. We see this as yet more proof of the government's total disinterest in the opinions or the interests of the people of Belarus and all the areas immediately surrounding it. We want to build up opposition not only to the plant, but to the people who would build it. (And of course, those of us who are anarchists—and that's not all of us, but some—also want this to be an example of the abuses of representative government.)

The plant will be built in the Vitebsk region but the starting date for construction has yet to be decided. There has been talk that workers displaced from the Chernobyl zone (who have a high rate of unemployment) will be used for this labor. There were ideas about having a camp but first of all, this would be impossible given the size of the Belarus police state and second, many activists are critical of this as a tactic. We are going to be conducting various information campaigns and trying to build up local activism. Later there will be various actions starting in April throughout Belarus and different points in Europe.

Activists from 12 countries have already signed up for this project, so it already has international scope.

Anybody who is interested in this initiative should help out. We need international journalists who are willing to investigate the building of the plant and the condition of people resettled after Chernobyl in Belarus. Further, we need to cover expenses for posters, literature etc. Anybody that has good anti-nuclear material, especially graphics, please send them to me via snail mail @ PO Box 500, Moscow 107051.

—Laurc A.

**Atshy** is the name of the coolest commune in the Caucasus — a love shack in Maikop, home of anarcho and radicals trying to transform life. OK, maybe it's not a love shack, but it's communal living, harmony with nature, democratic decision making... a model for other friends to follow. "Atshy" are actively involved in lots of projects, including running an activist/info center in Maikop. Unlike many people in communes, they haven't "dropped out" of society but work hard to change it.

Atshy have been particularly active in the ecological movement and have started publishing a digest. If you want to get in touch with them, you can reach them by e-mail at atshy@glasnet.ru.



## Eco-Anarchists penetrated Czech Nuclear Power Plant

The night of June 9 a group of four activists from eco-anarchist faction of CSAF (Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation) penetrated the high security area of Temelin nuclear power plant in Southern Bohemia through an area with barbed wire obstacles, etc. They were spotted by special infra-red scanners and numerous security agents in guard towers. The anarchists then climbed the 150m high special cooling tower and showed a red anarchist flag with a black star.

The security guards discovered them after five hours only because the fifth of the activists, who stayed outside, announced this successful direct action to the media. One of activists in the area of Temelin even reached the building where U 238/235 nuclear fuel is kept. No guard would have prevented the activists for instance setting bombs or damaging the building, etc.

The police came several minutes after media were alerted. All four activists were arrested and face charges of "destroying private property," because they damaged the fences around the power plant by cutting the wire.

The headquarters of CEZ, Czech energy company, claimed that they have nothing to say regarding this incident. The direct action again proved the disastrous state of security measures in Temelin.

## Czech Squat Evicted

At 22.30 September 3rd, Police units stormed the new squat in Prague—Zenkova street. The house, which had stood empty for nine years, had been squatting for one month. The 15 squatters had begun repairs on all 30 rooms in the three story building, cleaning, replacing broken windows and installing a toilet. They also had plans to repair the plumbing which had been destroyed over the years and reconnect the electricity. The squatters planned to open an info-cafe and tea room.

The whole event was widely covered by the media, with no comments. The short life of the squat was already successful — local citizens criticized the police for the eviction and praised the squatters for repairing the house, whose owner left it to deteriorate for long years. The families in the closest neighborhood, belonging to the Gypsy community, also showed some solidarity with the squatters.

Eight people arrested during the eviction may be charged after par. 249-a) of a penal law — "illegal use of housing estate" — for which they can be fined up to 50,000 CZK (1500 USD) or imprisoned for 2 years. In addition they can be liable for all expenses involved in the eviction.

Two weeks after the eviction, some of the activists resquatted the building and reached some kind of agreement with the building's owner. Around the same time, the squatters at 28 Soccera street struck an agreement with the city authorities. In return for leaving the squat voluntarily, the squatters were given another house free of charge. The new building will house a "Center of Free Education," run by the former squatters.

The *Lao Tzu* is one of the great anarchist classics.<sup>(1)</sup> No significant philosophical work of either East or West has been more thoroughly pervaded by the anarchistic spirit. None of the Western political thinkers known as major anarchist theorists have possessed a sensibility or expressed a world view that is as deeply anarchic as those exhibited in this ancient text.

Anarchism is known perhaps above all for its uncompromising critique of all forms of domination. Classical anarchism<sup>(2)</sup> made a considerable contribution to this critique through its withering attack on the state and economic exploitation, and through its groundbreaking analysis of bureaucracy and technological domination.

More recently, the anarchist critique has expanded considerably. With the growth of feminism has come an awareness of the centrality of patriarchy to the origin and perpetuation of hierarchical society. And the emergence of the ecological perspective has led to a careful examination of human domination of nature. Contemporary anarchist thought deserves recognition for incorporating these advances in a much more comprehensive theoretical analysis. However, an examination of the *Lao Tzu* reveals that over two millennia ago ancient Taoist thought had already begun exploring rather profoundly all the dimensions of domination that have concerned anarchists over the past century and a half.

While the critique of domination is an important aspect of anarchism, even more essential is the underlying positive world view that gives direction to the project of social transformation. Classical anarchist theory often presented a rather inspiring view of human possibilities, and questioned certain aspects of the dominant Western world view.

#### A cooperative, non-dominating society

But although anarchism exhibited some awareness of a need to break with atomistic individualism, metaphysical dualism and a mechanist view of nature, none of its major exponents inquired deeply into the ontological and ethical basis for a cooperative, non-dominating society. Contemporary anarchist theory has begun to fill this gap, as it moves toward a more dialectical and holistic anarchism that addresses crucial philosophical questions. Especially

**The *Lao Tzu* is perhaps the most eloquent expression of society's recollection of its lost oneness, an evocation of the condition of whole which preceded the rending of the social fabric by institutions like the state, private property and patriarchy.**

in so far as it is inspired by an ecological perspective, recent anarchism has begun to reconsider fundamentally the nature of the self, society and nature. It has begun to develop a dialectical, holistic view of reality in which the whole (whether nature, the earth, society or the person) is looked upon as a unity-in-diversity or unity-in-difference, and in which the development and fulfillment of the part is seen to depend on its complex interrelationship with and unfolding within that larger whole.

From such a viewpoint, the good of the natural world as a whole is attained as each of the wholes it encompasses—humanity, other species, biomes, ecosystems, bioregion—attain their respective goods. Moreover, the good of the human community is attained through each person attaining his or her unique good. And further, the person is seen not as an atomized individual, but as a social self, an embodiment of our common human nature in its process of historical development, and also as the most individualized and unique self-expression of reality, the most ultimately creative process.

The following discussion seeks to show that on almost every key point the *Lao Tzu* is in accord with such a dialectical, holistic ecological anarchism. We discover

first that the work teaches that ultimate reality—Tao—is a holistic unity-in-diversity, that it consists of interrelated processes of personal and universal self-realization, and that it is a system of natural order free from domination. Second, we find that the *Lao Tzu* sees the Taoist virtues of compassion, frugality, and non-assertion as the basis for an anarchistic, non-authoritarian personality and for corresponding non-dominating social relations. And finally, we see that the work's conception of the ruler-sage is founded on an anarchist politics of the anti-political that rejects the state, law, and coercion.

Perhaps the most pervasive theme of the *Lao Tzu* is its vision of an organic unity-in-diversity. One of the most powerful metaphors in the work is that of "the Uncarved Block" through which we are called back to a deep, underlying reality, a primordial truth that humanity has largely forgotten. Our customs, our social conditioning, our language, in fact the most fundamental categories by which we interpret the world, lead us to fragment reality, to shatter it violently into a system of disconnected, or, at best, externally related objects and egos. A basic problem is to create an awareness of the oneness that underlies this multiplicity, and to do this without resorting to an illusionism which denies reality by dissolving plurality into nothingness. Taoism in no sense seeks an escape from the diversity and complexity of the world. On the contrary, its unifying vision coexists with an almost Nietzschean affirmation of individuality.

Yet the concreteness of the Taoist vision goes beyond this. The perception of the gap between unity-in-diversity and unreconciled division is firmly rooted in historical reality. It is essential to understand the *Lao Tzu* as perhaps the most eloquent expression of society's recollection of its lost integrity, an evocation of the condition of wholeness that preceded the rending of the social fabric by institutions such as the state, private property, and patriarchy. Significantly, the *Lao Tzu* encompasses a ringing condemnation of all three of these systems, and proposes their replacement by institutions much closer to the socially organic or holistic ones of tribal societies. Just as Stanley Diamond has called for an understanding of Plato which takes into account his relation to these world-

historical transformations (that is, as annihilator of the remnants of tribal values), so we should see the place of the *Lao Tzu* in this conflict (as a reaffirmation of organic society and its values).<sup>(3)</sup>

What precisely does the

*Lao Tzu* say about the nature of Tao as unity?<sup>(4)</sup> Often it is said to be the origin of every-

thing, that out of which all arises, that on which all things depend. It is "the ancestor of all things" (Chan, 4) and "the mother of all things." (Chan, 1) These images can be somewhat deceptive if they are taken to imply any separation between Tao and the universe. For there is no division: Tao is all-inclusive and immanent in the Ten Thousand Things. "Analogically, Tao in the world (where everything is embraced by it), may be compared to rivers and streams running into the sea." (Chan, 32) There is thus a unity that underlies the multiplicity of the universe.

This oneness is not, however, a static unity, but rather the unity of the interrelated parts of a creative process. This follows from the assertion that Tao consists of both being and non-being. "All things in the world come from being. And being comes from non-being." (Chan, 40) As the opening chapter of the work explains, both being and non-being are aspects of Tao, and a full comprehension of

reality requires knowledge of both the multiplicity of existing things and also of the process of generation, the emergence from non-being into being:

"Non-Being" names this beginning of Heaven and Earth; "Being" names the mother of the myriad things. Therefore, some people constantly dwell in 'Non-Being'

Because they seek to perceive its mysteries, While some constantly dwell in 'Being' Because they seek to preserve its boundaries. These two ['Non-Being' and 'Being'] are of the same origin, But have different names. . . . (Young and Ames)

This view of Tao immediately brings to mind many similar concepts in both Eastern and Western thought. Notable examples include the distinction in Vedanta between Nirguna and Saguna Brahman, Böhme's references to the divine *Ungrund* and *Urggrund*, and Eckhart's evocation of a *Gott* that is more primordial than even *Gott*. There have been numerous attempts to explain the ubiquity of this coexistence of negative and positive description in mystical and organic thought of many traditions. One approach is to stress the fact that in view of the inadequacy of our objectifying, delimiting language, real-



reality requires knowledge of both the multiplicity of existing things and also of the process of generation, the emergence from non-being into being:

"Non-Being" names this beginning of Heaven and Earth; "Being" names the mother of the myriad things. Therefore, some people constantly dwell in 'Non-Being'

Because they seek to perceive its mysteries, While some constantly dwell in 'Being' Because they seek to preserve its boundaries. These two ['Non-Being' and 'Being'] are of the same origin, But have different names. . . . (Young and Ames)

This view of Tao immediately brings to mind many similar concepts in both Eastern and Western thought. Notable examples include the distinction in Vedanta between Nirguna and Saguna Brahman, Böhme's references to the divine *Ungrund* and *Urggrund*, and Eckhart's evocation of a *Gott* that is more primordial than even *Gott*. There have been numerous attempts to explain the ubiquity of this coexistence of negative and positive description in mystical and organic thought of many traditions. One approach is to stress the fact that in view of the inadequacy of our objectifying, delimiting language, real-



# Tao of narchy

It can only be grasped by contradictory predication. The concept of the ultimate as the totality captures one aspect of reality: the oneness of all things. Yet it is necessary to speak of the ultimate as nothingness or non-being, inasmuch as reality is not a mere collection of all things in the world, but a unity in which our conventional conceptions of "thingness" or individuality are negated.<sup>(5)</sup>

This explains part of what is intended in the *Lao Tzu*. But further, the assertion of the ultimacy of both being and non-being is an assault on all static conceptions of reality. Taoism should not be confused with forms of organicist thought (or pseudo-organicism) that call for "identification" with a timeless, spaceless, motionless One. The whole, like each being, is a process of becoming in which both being and non-being are ever-present moments. No doubt the mystery of birth was a tremendous influence in the shaping of this conception. Just as gestation and birth are processes through which a being emerges and develops out of the vague and mysterious void, so the universe as being must arise out of nothingness. Yet this is not to be taken in a mere mythological or cosmogonical sense, for the process of generation is asserted to be without beginning. It is thus an explanation of the enduring structure of reality. The process is repeated in the origination and development of each being in the universe:

Man models himself after Earth.  
Earth models itself after Heaven.  
Heaven models itself after Tao.  
And Tao models itself after Nature. (Chan, 25)

There is thus a macrocosm-microcosm relationship between the universal Tao and each being, although this relationship in no way negates the individuality and uniqueness of each. For in both cases development is a process of creative-self realization.

According to the *Lao Tzu*, each being has its own Tao, in the sense of its own path of self-development and unfolding. While it is true, as David Hall argues, that Taoism rejects "principles as transcendent determining sources of order,"<sup>(6)</sup> and as Roger Ames contends, that it negates such "authoritarian determination" as "teleological purpose, divine design, Providence,"<sup>(7)</sup> it would be incorrect to conclude that Taoism dispenses with all teleology. In fact, Tao can perhaps be described best as the immanent telos of all beings. It is not surprising that teleology should seem tainted by authoritarianism, given the character of teleological philosophy from Plato and Aristotle to Hegel and Marx. But while "orthodox" forms of teleological explanation have certainly embodied a theoretical will to power and have served to legitimate class domination, nationalism, and human exploitation of nature, there is no necessary connection between teleology and domination. Thus, in the *Lao Tzu* we find a teleology that recognizes that each being has its own unique processes of self-development that should not be imposed upon or distorted by external will or force:

To know harmony means to be in accord with the eternal.

To be in accord with the eternal means to be enlightened.

To force the growth of life means ill omen.

For the mind to employ the vital force without restraint means violence.

After things reach their prime, they begin to grow old.  
Which means being contrary to Tao.

Whatever is contrary to Tao will soon perish. (Chan, 55)

The point is that we should allow each being to follow its own ideal pattern of development, which we cannot "force," but only hinder, through our interference. Given the accompanying conditions for nurturing such growth, a fullness of being will be achieved, after which comes inevitable decline and dissolution. The famous Taoist image of the "Un-carved Block" expresses the idea of wholeness entailed in this self-development. The view of D. C. Lau that it means "a state as yet untouched by the artificial interference of human ingenuity"<sup>(8)</sup> partly misses the mark, since it implies that there can somehow be a pure, pristine Self independent of human society, and that there is something necessarily "artificial" about "human ingenuity." It is true that "carving the block" means distorting the self by interfering with its development according to its unique telos, but society does not necessarily have such an effect (and is, in fact, a necessary part of attaining such a development).

All human development takes place within the context of social relationships, and these can be the conditions for either self-realization or self-limitation. Consequently, "human ingenuity" can be just as much a means of preserving the "Un-carved Block" in its uncarved state, as a factor in distorting it. Thus, tribal societies that conceive of social relations primarily in terms of kinship, and that hold a vitalistic or panpsychist view of nature, tend to maintain a high degree of awareness of the social and natural roots of the self. Civilization, in identifying the self with social status (citizenship, class membership, property ownership, functional role, etc.) reduces the organic social self to a narrower individual or abstract ego. The *Lao Tzu* looks backward to the primordial unfragmented society and its

This essay originally appeared in John Clark's now out-of-print *The Anarchist Moment: Reflections on Culture, Nature and Power* (Black Rose Books, Montreal, 1984) as "Master Lao and the Anarchist Prince." John is Professor of Philosophy and Chair of Environmental Studies at Loyola University, New Orleans. He edits the *Freeport Watch Bulletin*, covering the activities of the evil Freeport-McMoRan mining corporation from POB 79, Loyola Univ., New Orleans LA 70118.

social self, just as it points forward to a restored organic society and a fully social person.

In the concept of the organic self, both Taoism and contemporary anarchism seek to transcend the narrow limits of "the individual." As Roger Ames notes, in a philosophy of organism the person "is understood as a matrix of relationships which can be fully expressed only by reference to the organic whole," and for this reason "the expression 'individual' might well be ruled altogether inappropriate in describing a person."<sup>(9)</sup> For similar reasons there has been a tendency in recent holistic anarchist thought to explicitly use the term "individual" to refer to that degraded self fabricated over the long history of social domination, and finally perfected in modern capitalist, statist, technobureaucratic society. The term "person" is reserved for the developed social self that can thrive only in an organic community embracing humanity and nature.

## A balance between order and chaos

Tao is thus both an organic unity-in-diversity and the ideal path of self-development or unfolding inherent in all things. Its third important dimension is in a sense merely the synthesis of these two. Given the organic connectedness of all beings, the totality of all processes of self-realization constitutes a harmonious system. Tao is thus a "natural order" that is manifested in the life of each being and in the functioning of the larger community of beings. As each being strives to reach its own natural perfection, while refraining from the quest to dominate other beings, the greatest possible order results. Thus, the *Lao Tzu* proclaims the ironic truth that attempts to control lead to disorder, and that as the degree of control becomes more extensive, the world becomes more chaotic.

According to Taoist principles, the order of nature depends on a balance between order and chaos. Just as the collapse of society into excessive disorder results in tyrannically imposed order, the pursuit of excessively rigid order produces disorder beyond the bounds of possible control. Spontaneity and order are not opposites, as is universally held according to political, technical, and economic rationality, but are rather inseparable aspects of the healthy functioning of an organic whole.

It is on the basis of this analysis that Taoism teaches that if each being is permitted to follow its Tao, the needs of all can be fulfilled without coercion and domination. Note the contrast between the generous and benevolent Tao (the gift-giving Creator Spirit of many cultures) and the power-crazed, demanding patriarchal authoritarian God (Bakunin's "Monster Divine"), who requires abject subservience from his creatures:

All things depend on it for life, and it does not turn away from them.

It accomplishes its task, but does not claim credit for it.

It clothes and feeds all things but does not claim to be master over them. (Chan, 34)

The Taoist vision penetrates the illusion of inevitable natural scarcity (an ideology that arose with the technical, political, and economic innovations of civilization), to apprehend the abundance of the outpouring of nature. Every society founded on domination and struggle within society has always perceived the human relation to nature as one of struggle, conflict, and conquest. No matter how vastly production may increase, scarcity persists or even expands. But in the *Lao Tzu*, as in the consciousness of pre-civilized humanity (the gift economy), nature is understood to be, rather than a collection of scarce resources, an infinite wealth, a plenitude:

Heaven and earth unite to drip sweet dew.

Without the command of men, it drips evenly over all. (Chan, 32)

When each follows his or her own Tao, and recognizes and respects the Tao in all other beings, a harmonious system of self-realization will exist in nature. (At this point the *Lao Tzu* begins to formulate history's first

**Continued on Next Page**

# The Tao of Anarchy

Continued from Centerfold

strongly ecological ethics). There is a kind of natural justice that prevails, so that the needs of each are fulfilled:

The Way of Heaven reduces whatever is excessive and supplements whatever is insufficient.

The Way of Man is different.

It reduces the insufficient to offer to the excessive. (Chan, 77)

According to Lau in statements such as the above "heaven is conceived of as taking an active hand in redressing the iniquities of this world," and "this runs counter to the view of the Tao generally to be found in the book as something non-personal and amoral."<sup>10</sup> But there is no reason to find such an inconsistency, unless one ignores the striking metaphysical consistency of the work, and interprets it as a more or less eclectic anthology of traditional wisdom. For if the Tao is an all-encompassing natural order, a unity-in-diversity in which the immanent telos of each being is in harmony with that of all others and of the whole, then there is no need to posit any sort of personal agency in the universe responsible for rectifying injustice. Order and justice are assured when each being follows its appropriate path of development. All other systems of order are mere social conventions, and to the degree that they deflect us from our natural end, they produce only disorder and injustice:

Therefore, only when Tao is lost does the doctrine of virtue arise.

When virtue is lost, only then does the doctrine of humanity arise.

When humanity is lost, only then does the doctrine of righteousness arise.

When righteousness is lost, only then does the doctrine of propriety arise.

Now propriety is a superficial expression of loyalty and faithfulness, and the beginning of disorder. (Chan, 38)

Insofar as morality means social convention, the *Lao Tzu* advocates a perspective of "amorality." But to the degree that it proposes a way of life founded on universal self-realization unrestricted by domination and instrumental rationality, it constitutes one of the most distinctive and significant moral theories ever propounded. In a sense the moral purpose of the *Lao Tzu* is its central one, for the emphasis in the work is never on mere description of the nature of things. The inquiry into ultimate reality is always firmly embedded in a search for a way of life, and a true understanding of the work requires that attention be given to the art of living that it describes. Fortunately, the author summarizes the essentials of this art very concisely:

I have three treasures.  
Guard and keep them: The first is deep love,  
The second is frugality,  
And the third is not to dare to be ahead of the world. (Chan, 67)

While the first Taoist virtue is compassion, some passages in the *Lao Tzu* give the impression that not only is love or compassion not virtuous, but even contrary to nature. For example:

Heaven and Earth are not humane (*jen*).  
They regard all things as straw dogs.  
The sage is not humane.  
He regards all people as straw dogs. (Chan, 5)

In asserting that the enlightened person regards all people as straw dogs—worthless ritual objects—the author seems to be rejecting both humanism and compassion. But this is only half true. While the *Lao Tzu* is predicated on a certain kind of anti-humanism (in fact, this is one of its great strengths), this does not imply a denial of the importance of compassion. Rather, it is only through a rejection of "humanism" in the sense of anthropocentrism that the greatest possible compassion can arise. To act "humanely" means, at worst, merely accepting the conventions of society concerning morality and goodness, and implies, at best, remaining within the biased perspective of species self-interest. To transcend this "human" outlook means, as Chan says, to be "impartial, to have no favorites,"<sup>11</sup> but not in the sense of complete detachment. Rather, it is the im-partiality that results from identification with the whole, an impartiality that allows one to respect all beings and value their various goods.<sup>12</sup> For this reason it is possible to assert that "the Sage has no fixed (personal) ideas. He regards the people's ideas as his own." (Chan, 49) and that "he has no personal interests." (Chan, 7)

The person who comprehends Tao is able to take the perspective of the other, and to overcome the egoism which treats the good of each as antagonistic to that of the other. This is one of the implications of the famous passage stating that:

[H]e who values the world as his body may be entrusted with the empire.



teaching that one should seek simplicity and frugality, and avoid luxury, extravagance, and excess.

Some interpretations of the *Lao Tzu* hold that it advocates "asceticism." If this term is defined as a kind of self-denial or self-sacrifice for the sake of some higher Good, then the truth is just the contrary. And even if it is construed as a kind of "renunciation" (as it has sometimes unfortunately been translated) for the sake of one's own spiritual growth, this misses the point somewhat. The life of "simplicity" is in no way the impoverished life of one who seeks escape from the corrupt world and its temptations. Rather it is something much more affirmative: it is the consummate existence of one who has rejected whatever would stunt or distort growth and personal fulfillment.

Simplicity is not, however, a quality with implications for personal life alone. It refers also to social institutions which will promote rather than hinder self-realization. A society based on social status, or one glorifying the pursuit of material wealth and permitting economic domination, is inevitably destructive, producing conflict, disorder, envy, and crime:

Do not exalt the worthy, so that the people will not compete.

Do not value rare treasures, so that the people shall not steal.

Do not display objects of desire, so that the people's hearts shall not be disturbed. (Chan, 3)

Rather, we should "discard profit." (Chan, 19) But in doing so, we are losing nothing, for the pursuit of wealth and social status only distracts one from the essential task of following one's authentic way. Just as the New Testament asks "what would anyone gain by winning the whole world but losing his own life," (Matt. 16:26, Mk. 8:36) so the *Lao Tzu* places in question the value of wealth and prestige:

Which does one love more, fame or one's own life?  
Which is more valuable, one's own life or wealth?  
He who hoards most will lose heavily. (Chan, 44)

But wealth and luxury are not condemned only because of their spiritually debilitating quality. There is also a recognition that they are unjust and contrary to the order of nature. The *Lao Tzu* attacks the institutions of civilization on the grounds that whereas nature "reduces whatever is excessive and supplements what is insufficient," human society "reduces the insufficient to offer to the excessive." (Chan, 77) The criticism of political and economic institutions is sometimes made quite explicit:

**We should "discard profit." But in doing so, we are losing nothing, for the pursuit of wealth and social status only distracts one from the essential task of following one's authentic way.**

He who loves the world as his body may be entrusted with the empire. (Chan, 13)

Some commentators have stressed the implicit approval of a kind of selfishness in the concept of concern for one's body.<sup>13</sup> There is an element of truth in this view, for unless one fully affirms his or her own existence and process of self-realization, there is no possibility of truly valuing other beings or of affirming reality. But a further important implication of the passage is that one should identify with the whole. Realizing one's own Tao is identical with participation in the universal Tao. Thus, all self-realization—one's own and that of all others is valued by one who understands Tao. Compassion arises from a "self love" that has nothing to do with egoism.

The way of life advocated in the *Lao Tzu* is thus based on love, respect, and compassion for all beings. If such a life is to be lived, one must understand the bounds of one's own Tao: what is essential to one's own self-realization, what is unnecessary, and what undermines it and that of others. The *Lao Tzu* expresses this idea in its

The courts are exceedingly splendid,  
While the fields are exceedingly weedy,  
And the granaries are exceedingly empty.  
Elegant clothes are worn,  
Sharp weapons are carried,  
Foods and drinks are enjoyed beyond limit,  
And wealth and treasures are accumulated in excess.  
This is robbery and extravagance.  
This is indeed not Tao (the way). (Chan, 53)

While this attack on economic and social inequity<sup>14</sup> seems fully in accord with the anti-hierarchical Taoist outlook, it might seem strange to some that the *Lao Tzu* would go so far as to launch an attack on knowledge and wisdom in the name of simplicity.<sup>15</sup> Why would a work which itself attempts to transmit wisdom about life, and which has traditionally been attributed to an "Old Sage," counsel one to "abandon sageliness and discard wisdom?" (Chan, 19) The truth conveyed is not as obscure as it might appear initially. In an organic society, knowledge (like art, religion, and politics) is integrated into the

life of the community, rather than reified as a possession of the privileged members of a hierarchical institution. The *Lao Tzu* is attacking knowledge as the property of an elite intelligentsia or a class of literati. Just as material wealth sets one against another and seduces people away from their natural good, so knowledge will do likewise if it is reduced to a means of amassing power.

True wisdom is different from much learning;  
Much learning means little wisdom.

The sage has no need to hoard;

When his own last scrap has been used up on behalf of others,

Lo, he has more than before! (Waley)

A final important implication of the concept of simplicity is that certain forms of technology should be rejected and that technical efficiency must not be accepted uncritically as a justification for social change. The *Lao Tzu* exhibits an awareness that technological development, which has always been justified as fulfilling human needs, may in fact be destructive of human self-realization and of the social institutions most conducive to it. It expresses a well-founded fear that dangerous artificial wants and desires may be created, and that complex, hierarchical social institutions, accompanied by egoism, inequality, and disorder may arise. Consequently, the community should reject such technology and preserve its simplicity:

Given a small country with few inhabitants, he could bring it about that though there should be among the people contrivances requiring ten times, a hundred times less labor, he would not use them. (Waley)

There is nothing in the Taoist view that implies that new *non-dominating* forms of technology should be rejected. But given the fact that actual technical innovation in the epoch of the *Lao Tzu* in fact served the purposes of power and control (as it does in our own day), it is not surprising that the work should emphasize the need for a more critical approach to technological change.

Another important theme that runs throughout the *Lao Tzu* is the necessity of avoiding competition and other forms of self-assertive and aggressive action. What is proposed instead is "non-action" or "actionless action" (*wu-wei*), activity which is in accord with one's own Tao and with those of all others. Since one achieves the good life by following one's own unique path, there is no point in striving to place oneself "above" others. In fact, to do so is self-destructive, since in competing we subordinate ourselves to some external standard of goodness, virtue, or success. Even if we "win," we are defeated, since we have conformed to the alien values of those whom we have vanquished. Competition conflicts with Taoism's "polycentric" viewpoint, as David Hall calls it. Such a viewpoint emphasizes individuality and the uniqueness of each being, and excludes individualism, which is necessarily a comparative and competitive mentality. The Taoist sage will therefore "succeed" through eschewing the quest for power and prestige:

He does not show himself; therefore he is luminous.  
He does not justify himself; therefore he becomes prominent.

He does not boast of himself; therefore he is given credit.

He does not brag; therefore he can endure for long.  
It is precisely because he does not compete that the world cannot compete with him. (Chan, 22)

In describing such a non-aggressive, non-dominating personality, the *Lao Tzu* continually resorts to images of the female and the child. Roger Ames correctly notes that the Taoist advocates a form of androgyny in which "the masculine and feminine gender traits are integrated in some harmonious and balanced relationship."<sup>16</sup> This is the clear implication of the statement that:

He who knows the male (active force) and keeps to the female (the passive force or receptive element)  
Becomes the ravine of the world. (Chan, 28)

The concept of rigidly defined sex roles is totally alien to the Taoist sensibility, since this implies subordinating

the unique person to social convention, and denying the diversity of human nature. It is another example of cutting the "Uncarved Block," or interfering brutally with Tao.

But there is a good reason why, in spite of its androgynism, the *Lao Tzu* should stress heavily the importance of the female. For it is launching a direct (if non-aggressive) attack on one of history's most entrenched and enduring systems of domination: patriarchy. Under a patriarchal system there is little need to emphasize the value of "masculine" qualities. What is required is a vehement defense of the "feminine." For-

To lead them, but not to master them—  
This is called profound and secret virtue (*hsuan-ie*). (Chan, 10)

In a Taoist community, people are permitted to develop according to their own Tao, so that to the extent that "masculinity" and "femininity" exist (as contrasting, but not opposed qualities), they are spontaneous and natural. An infinite variety in combinations of qualities might occur. Without *imposed* sex roles, an anarchistic, non-prescriptive androgyny is the ideal. However, if we limit our consideration to the strictly opposed sex roles of patriarchal society, no reconciliation of the antagonistic roles is possible, and the "feminine" must be selected as being closer to the ideal.

For similar reasons Taoism often presents the child as the model of virtue. This is also heretical from the perspective of patriarchal societies. Since virtuousness is conventionally identified with the power and status of the adult male, the recommendation that adults emulate infants appears ludicrous at best. Yet for anti-patriarchal Taoism, the child has two essential qualities in abundance: non-aggressiveness and spontaneity. While in a society based on hierarchical power, strength is valued greatly as a personal characteristic, in the Taoist society founded on "natural order" and unity-in-difference one should seek "the highest degree of weakness like an infant." (Chan, 10) The infant is not ruled by inordinate desires, such as the longing for power, wealth, status, or luxury. Instead, all actions are natural and spontaneous. As the *Lao Tzu* states in an irrefutable argument:

He may cry all day without becoming hoarse,  
This means that his (natural) harmony is perfect. (Chan, 55)



**When the great Tao is forgotten,  
goodness and piety appear.  
When the body's intelligence  
declines,  
cleverness and knowledge step  
forth.**

**When there is no peace in the  
family,  
filial piety begins.  
When the country falls into chaos,  
patriotism is born.**

**Throw away holiness and wisdom,  
and people will be a hundred times  
happier.**

**Throw away morality and justice,  
and people will do the right thing.  
Throw away industry and profit,  
and there won't be any thieves.**

### —Tao Te Ching

thermore, while it is true that "masculine" qualities are recognized in the *Lao Tzu* to be of value, those usually stereotyped by most societies as "feminine" seem in fact to be the more essential ones to the Taoist perspective. In a revealing passage, creativity and love (in the non-posessive "maternal" sense) are identified as "feminine":

Can you understand all and penetrate all without taking any action?

To produce things and to rear them,  
To produce, but not to take possession of them,  
To act, but not to rely on one's own ability,

Just as in nature the softest and weakest thing, water, can overcome the hardest obstacle, so softness and weakness are the most effective qualities in personal development. Softness characterizes the organic, while hardness is typical of the inorganic and mechanistic. Rigidity, both mental and physical, is an attribute of the authoritarian. Rigid muscles and rigid categories are two closely related armaments in the futile battle to stop the flow of reality. As Wilhelm Reich explains, "character armor" is the means by which the authoritarian personality seeks to avoid the threat of feeling and experiencing too much.<sup>17</sup> The *Lao Tzu* states the same point:

When a man is born, he is tender and weak.  
At death he is stiff and hard.  
All things, the grass as well as trees, are tender and supple while alive.  
When dead, they are withered and dried.  
Therefore the stiff and the hard are companions of death.  
The tender and weak are companions of life. (Chan, 76)

What then can be said of a society obsessed with economic and political power, a society riddled with bureaucratic and technocratic organization, a society convinced that "security" comes from military strength (in short, of civilization in its most advanced state)? From the Taoist viewpoint such a society is striving to reduce people to a condition of living death. Our society, even more than the one existing in the era of the *Lao Tzu*, possesses all the qualities that are the target of the work's devastating attack. It illustrates well how a holistic, organicist philosophy implies an anarchist critique of both the institutions of an inorganic society based on power relations and of the character structures that prevail in such a society.

In view of this critique, it is true, as Roger Ames argues, that Taoism should not be judged "quietistic," as it often is when its discussion of the feminine, the childlike, weakness, and softness are not analyzed carefully.<sup>18</sup> When power is combated by means of its own methods ("strength"), power inevitably prevails, no matter which side is victorious. But despite its rejection of aggressiveness, Taoism does not propose a quietistic withdrawal from the world. Rather, it contends that the foundations of power can be undermined by "rivers and streams flowing to the sea." (Chan, 32) By this is meant the liberation of other powers—the powers of self-real-

ization—of both humanity and nature.

In spite of all its anti-authoritarianism, one might conclude that what the *Lao Tzu* advocates is at best quasi-anarchistic, in view of the fact that the work is explicitly addressed to the ruler, and because the existence of the state is accepted. While Roger Ames argues for the coherence of the idea of Taoist anarchism, he contends that the *Lao Tzu* does not fully adopt this position, since it "sees the state as a natural institution, analogous perhaps to the family."<sup>19</sup> Frederic Bender goes even further, concluding that the work is "hardly anarchistic in the Western sense, since it retains, albeit in improved form, ruler, rule, and the means of rule (the state)."<sup>20</sup>

But in fact the *Lao Tzu* dispenses with all of these, if they are taken in their political sense. Its major divergence from classical Western anarchism is that, given its more thorough rejection of patriarchy, technological domination, and domination of nature, and given the greater coherence of its metaphysical foundations, the *Lao Tzu* is more consistently anarchistic. In fact the *Lao Tzu* expresses an entirely negative view of government. It is true that occasionally it sounds as if only the excesses of political control are condemned:

The people starve because the ruler eats too much tax grain. . . .

They are difficult to rule because their ruler does too many things. (Chan, 75)

Such a passage might be taken to mean that good rulers would tax less and control people less. But in the context of the work's overall perspective "good rule" can only mean "no rule," that is, ruling without such measures as taxation and control. The idea of governmental "abuse" is absurd from the standpoint of the *Lao Tzu*, in view of the fundamental and absolute nature of its critique of government. As the ego is to the organic self, so is political society to the organic community. In both cases the *Lao Tzu* uses the image of the carving of the block:

Without law or compulsion, men would dwell in harmony.

Once the block is carved, there will be names. (Waley)

"Naming" refers to reifying dynamic processes, destroying natural unity, and reducing the organic to the

**The more laws there are, the more disorganized society will be; the more prisons are built, the more crime will increase; the more bureaucracy proliferates and experts are trained, the more social problems are aggravated; the more military power expands, the more conflicts occur and the more the threat of destruction looms larger.**

inorganic. And this is indeed the transformation that took place with the rise of the state. The organic, holistic community was divided or "cut up" into a society of classes, of rulers and ruled, of rich and poor, of elites and masses, and, finally, of individuals contending for power, or, at worst, mere "survival." The *Lao Tzu* shows an acute awareness of the contrast between previous organic society and existing political society, an awareness that must have been heightened by the intense degree of strife prevailing in its time. Yet the central objection to government is metaphysical: it is a distortion of reality, a destruction of the natural order of society, the replacement of Taoist "non-action" by control and domination.

Government, ruling, and domination are the sources of disorder. This is the political message of the *Lao Tzu*:

The people are difficult to keep in order because those above them interfere.

This is the only reason why they are so difficult to keep in order. (Waley)

What is strange is not this seemingly paradoxical statement, but rather the fact that after over two thousand years of evidence to support it, it still seems paradoxical.

If the *Lao Tzu* is correct, then the more laws there are, the more disorganized society will be; the more prisons are built, the more crime will increase; the more bureaucracy proliferates and experts are trained, the more social problems are aggravated; the more military power expands, the more conflicts occur and the more the threat of destruction looms larger. (Consequences such as these are predicted in Chapters 57 and 58 of the *Lao Tzu*.) And these have in fact been precisely the results of the political organization of society. Every expansion of political domination for the sake of maintaining order has only further destroyed the organic structure of society, thus advancing social disintegration and producing more deeply rooted disorder.

But can the proposed alternative to political society, a non-authoritarian, cooperative society, possibly exist? Frederic Bender thinks that it cannot, although it is not entirely clear what it is that he considers impossible (a non-coercive social system, a society "lacking entirely

The Nuer, Levi-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques*, Tait and Middleton's *Tribes Without Rulers*, Dorothy Lee's *Freedom and Culture*, and, above all, Pierre Clastres' *Society Against the State*.<sup>21</sup> Clastres' conclusions based on the study of many Amerindian tribes are especially striking:

"One is confronted, then, by a vast constellation of societies in which the holders of what elsewhere would be called power are actually without power; where the political is determined as a domain beyond coercion and violence, beyond hierarchical subordination; where, in a word, no relation of command-obedience is in force."<sup>22</sup>

To say that such societies have existed is certainly not to say that they fully embody the anti-authoritarian ideal of anarchism. Yet an exploration of the nature of organic societies of the past serves to show what was lost with the rise of civilization, and what might be regained in a more self-conscious form in the future. It also helps us understand that there are many kinds of authority, and that some imply neither membership in a special office-holding group possessing coercive power, nor even "authoritarianism" in any sense.

The Taoist ruler-sage is an example of one who exercises such non-dominating authority. This authority is, however, much closer to the anarchist ideal than is that of the tribal chief or elder. For whereas these figures often have no personal power at all, they may serve as vehicles through whom the restrictive force of tradition is transmitted. The Taoist ruler, on the other hand, imposes nothing on others, and refuses to legitimate his or her authority through the external supports of either law or tradition.

The *Lao Tzu* teaches that people should not (and, in fact, cannot) be coerced into doing "the right thing." This follows from the internal-development, immanent-good teleology of Taoism (which is opposed to the hierarchical-good teleology of Aristotle, the external-good teleology of utilitarianism, and the transcendent-good teleology of many Western religious views, for example). The sage does not attempt to legislate or require the good:

I take no action and the people of themselves are transformed.

I love tranquillity and the people of themselves become correct.

I engage in no activity and the people of themselves become prosperous.

I have no desires and the people of themselves become simple. (Chan, 57)

In view of this conception of the true ruler as one who does not interfere with the development of others, there is no reason to think that the sage is what is called in political terminology a "ruler." As Lau notes, "the sage is first and foremost a man who understands the Tao, and if he happens also to be a ruler he can apply his understanding of the Tao to government."<sup>23</sup> To this it must be added, first, that the anti-patriarchal *Lao Tzu* never implies that only men can be sages, and, secondly, that its application of "understanding of Tao" to government means not governing. Attempts to interpret the *Lao Tzu* as a manual of strategy in the "art of governing" inevitably fail. They require a rather extreme literal-mindedness, in which "ruling" must always mean holding political office, and "weapons" must always mean military, rather than spiritual arms.<sup>24</sup> The meaning attributed to rulership in the *Lao Tzu* is clear: it is the "nobility" that comes from identification with Tao, and with successfully following one's path of self-realization:

To know the eternal is called enlightenment.

Not to know the eternal is to act blindly and to result in disaster.

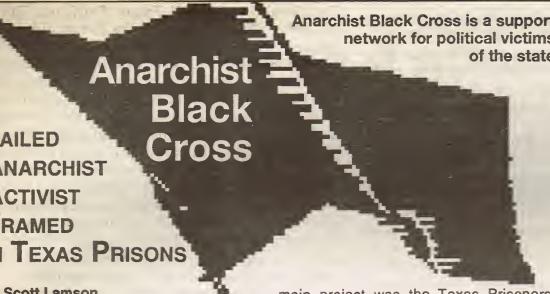
He who knows the eternal is all-embracing.

Being all-embracing, he is impartial.

Being impartial, he is kingly (universal). (Chan, 16)

The power of the ruler is thus not political: it comes from the force of example alone. It is for this reason that the *Lao Tzu* can assert that "the best (rulers) are those whose existence is (merely) known by the people." (Chan, 17) In fact, in several versions of the text the best rulers are "not" known by the people.<sup>25</sup> Presumably, they are not known as rulers or leaders in the ordinary sense, although they are known as models of personal





by Scott Lamson  
Philadelphia Anarchist Black Cross

main project was the Texas Prisoners' Anarchist Lending Library.

Organizations such as Books-Through-Bars in Philadelphia, Books-To-Prisoners in Seattle, plus many individuals donated books to the project. Prison authorities and white supremacist prison gangs alike felt threatened by a library providing radical and progressive literature by and about African-Americans, Chicanos, Native Americans and poor/working-class whites.

After being involved with the squatting movement on New York's Lower East Side in the late 80's and early 90's, Plummer traveled the country. During this time, he and others formed the United Anarchist Front, a group designed to confront capitalist and oppressive institutions. He was convicted in 1993 for his part in an action against a Nazi-skinhead house in Houston after police found his fingerprints at the scene.

The goal was stopping the American Front, an openly fascist group proud of its record of extreme violence, from spreading propaganda in neighborhoods and schools. There were no injuries in the attack, and only Nazi hate literature was destroyed. Still, Chris faced several charges including attempted murder. This was dropped after Chris would not turn in his friends, but he was convicted on burglary charges.

Chris did not stop his organizing efforts after being jailed. The Texas prison system has a well justified reputation of being a maelstrom of hate, terror and exploitation. Encouraging conflict between different races is one way control is maintained by the prison authorities. In spite of this environment, Chris set up Cell One, a prisoner organization at the Huntsville facility, home of Texas's notorious Death Row. Cell One's

For days afterwards, Chris endured re-

Anarchist Black Cross is a support network for political victims of the state

peated strip and cell searches. In his own words: "I have been pulled out of my cell an average of 13 times per 8-hour shift. I have not had a solid hour's sleep in 3 days. They refuse to allow me to even have stamps or writing materials. And I have no doubt they will carry out some of their threats."

Chris' mail is heavily censored and letters to and from some of his support groups have been seized as "gang-related." Worse, Chris was visited by Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) agents in October and told gun smuggling charges will be filed against him. A conviction could result in a 40 year sentence.

Chris has declared to me that he "will not do a day of (the jail term). If I'm convicted of this new charge, I will hunger strike to the end—that's that."

We must defend Chris and halt this torturous injustice, not just because Chris' life is on the line, but because if we ignore his plight, our own struggles will be that much weaker.

#### What you can do:

Please write and call the following:  
Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms attn: Charles Meyer, 9009 Mountain Ridge Dr., Austin TX; 78759 (512) 349-4545;

Wayne Scott, Director TDC, P.O. Box 99, Huntsville TX 77342; (409) 295-6371

Demand that the charges against Chris Plummer, #677345, be dropped, that threats and harassment be stopped, and insist his stolen property be returned.

Chris is desperately searching for a lawyer. If you can help, provide funds to cover legal costs, or need more information, please contact:

Chris Plummer Support Group, c/o M.L., 271 E. 10th St. #47, New York, N.Y. 10009 (212) 505-8014

Stay in touch with Chris at:

Christopher Lee Plummer #677345, Hughes Unit Rt. 2, Box 4400, Gatesville TX 76597

#### ABC Books to Prisoners Program

Through its Books to Prisoners program, Detroit ABC provides anarchist and general interest titles to locked down comrades. Donations of quality paperbacks

are needed (hardcovers usually aren't allowed in prisons) to meet numerous requests from prisoners. We especially encourage publishers and bookstores to contribute seconds or damaged books. We also need shipping and packing material and stamps to help defray the cost of mailing the books.

Requests for books or donations to the project can be sent to Detroit ABC, c/o Fifth Estate, 4632 Second Ave., Detroit MI 48201.

ABC has sent a donation of books to the prisoner library listed below, and will forward titles sent by *Fifth Estate* readers.

#### Greetings:

Unfortunately, many prisoners and myself are slammed (locked down) for our refusal to work. But, I'd rather be sitting on my ass in my cell than working for these capitalist slavers!

The imprisoned anarchist comrades and myself are starting an anarchist lending library and we're inspired. Though I've been doing this for a couple of years now, I'd like to broaden our collection of literature. It would be appreciated if you could send us a bit of everything from the anarchist milieu. Please let people know the return address must be that of a publisher or bookstore.

Chris "Spit" Gross  
P.O. Box 7000  
Carson City NV 89702

Send letters of support and your publications to the following imprisoned anarchist victims of the state:

The Gandalf Defendants: Saxon Burchall-Wood, #CK4322, HMP Guys Marsh, Shafsbury, Dorest, SP7 0AH, UK, Noel Molland, #CK4321, HMP Channings Wood, Densbury, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ2 6DW, UK and Stephen Booth, #CK4323, HMP Lancaster Castle, Lancaster, LA1 1YL, UK.

Harold Thompson, Harold Thompson Support Campaign, c/o Raze the Walls, PO Box 22774, Seattle WA 98122-0774.

For a "Workers & Prisoners Basic Study Guide," write: Black Autonomy Collective, 323 Broadway E. #914, Seattle WA 98102.

## The Tao of Anarchy

Continued from Page 20

development. In either case a subtle, non-coercive authority is attributed to the ruler. There is nothing in this kind of authority that is contrary to anarchism. It is neither imposed on anyone nor used to manipulate.

On the contrary, it is the result of the most non-aggressive activity, and can only exist if "the people," seeing the sage following the path of non-dominating self-realization, freely choose to do likewise.

Thus, the *Lao Tzu* does not propose the continuation of traditional political authority, but instead its replacement by natural authority. The "empire" that is ruled by the sage is not the political state, but rather the natural order that is attained by the affirmation of one's own Tao and that of all other beings.

The *Lao Tzu* proclaims implicitly what is stated explicitly in the *Huai Nan Tzu*: "Possessing the empire" means "self-realization."<sup>(28)</sup>

#### Notes

(1) The *Lao Tzu* or *Tao Te Ching* is one of the great philosophical classics of world literature. Taoism, which takes much of its inspiration from the work, (with Confucianism and Buddhism) one of the three great traditions of thought and practice spanning much of the history of Chinese civilization. The *Lao Tzu* has over the ages appealed to diverse groups of readers. Some have found in it philosophical enlightenment; others, a path to mystical experience; and still others, knowledge of the means for personal growth. In recent years, many Western readers have given it more careful attention, as the growth of ecological consciousness has uncovered fatal limitations in Western views of nature, and the Taoist philosophy of nature has been looked to as a more adequate alternative.

(2) By "classical" anarchism I mean the tradition associated closely with the International workers' movement. This tradition began in the mutualism of the French labor movement of the 1840's, spread across much of Europe and Latin America by the early 20th century in the form of anarcho-communism and, especially, anarcho-syndicalism, and ended with the precipitous decline of anarcho-syndicalism after the defeat of the Spanish Revolution in the late 1930's.

(3) "Plato and the Defense of the Primitive" in *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1974), pp. 176-202.

(4) References to the *Lao Tzu* in the text will cite the translator and the number of the chapter cited. The following translations and commentaries are cited in the text: Wing-Tsit Chan, "The *Lao Tzu*" in *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), which will be the primary source cited; R.B. Blackley, *The Way of Life* (New York: New American Library, 1955); Rhett V.W. Young and Roger T. Ames, *Lao Tzu Text, Notes, and Comments* (by Ch'en Ku-ylung) (Taiwan: Chinese Materials Center, 1981); D.C. Lau, *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963); and Arthur Waley, *The Way and Its Power: A Study of the Tao Te Ching and Its Place in Chinese Thought* (New York: Grove Press, 1958).

(5) Cf. John Findlay, "The Logic of Mysticism" in *Religious Studies* (1972).

(6) David Hall, "The Metaphysics of Anarchism," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 10 (1983): 58-59.

(7) Roger Ames, "Is Political Taoism Anarchism?" in *Ibid.*, p. 34.

(8) Lau, p. 36.

(9) Ames, pp. 31, 30.

(10) Lau, p. 24.

(11) Chan, p. 142.

(12) See Holmes Welch's excellent discussion of this passage in *Taoism: The Parting of the Way* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), pp. 44-45.

(13) See Lau, p. 40, and Waley, pp. 157-158.

(14) I say "inequity" in an effort to stress that Taoism does not advocate "equality," but rather a system of values in which equality and inequality have no meaning.

(15) A reductive simplification is often the result of the growth of complex, inorganic social institutions. The social self has the kind of rich complexity that is the goal of Taoist "simplicity."

(16) Roger Ames, "Taoism and the Androgynous Idea," in *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 8 (1981): 43.

(17)

See Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

(18) This is the case with Murray Bookchin's "anarchist" and "social ecological" attacks on Taoism. With a condescending assurance of Taoism's theoretical incoherence and political ineffectuality, this champion of Western rationality parades its philosophical content, recklessly quotes passages out of context, and writes history selectively.

(19) Ames, "Political Taoism," p. 35.

(20) Frederic Bender, "Taoism and Western Anarchism: A Comparative Study," in *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 10 (1983): 12.

(21) *Ibid.*, p. 22.

(22) *Ibid.*

(23) E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (New York: Pocket Books, 1977); David Tait and John Middleton, *Tribes Without Rulers* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958); Dorothy Lee, *Freedom and Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1959); Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State: The Leader as Servant and the Humane Uses of Power Among the Indians of the Americas* (New York: Urizen Books, 1977).

(24) Clastres, p. 5.

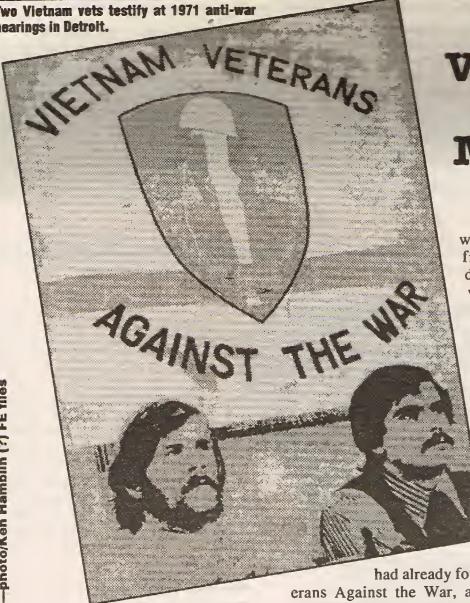
(25) Lau, p. 35.

(26) See some of the *Lao Tzu*'s fascinating insights on the nature of war and self-defense, see chapters 31, 36 and 69.

(27) Chan, p. 148.

(28) Cited in Ames, "Political Taoism," p. 36.

Chinese characters from *The Essence of Tai Chi Chuan: The Literary Tradition*, Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo, et al, North Atlantic Books.



—photo/Ken Hamblin (?) FE files

*Winter Soldiers: An Oral History of Vietnam Veterans Against the War*, Richard Stacewicz, Twayne Publishers, 1997, New York, 471 pp.

by Nick Medvecky

For April 15th, 1967, the Detroit section of the anti-Vietnam war movement chartered an entire train. War protesters from around the nation converged on New York City for a huge march and rally.

Before the sun set that day, a half million people rallied at Sheep's Head Meadow in South Central Park and marched down Fifth Avenue, overflowing numerous side streets and filling the United Nations plaza. Another 100,000 demonstrated in San Francisco. It was an auspicious display of the power of the antiwar movement, demonstrating the mass proportions it had achieved in just two years of organizing.

Behind the parade leaders that day (which included Martin Luther King, Jr., signifying the melding of the two great movements of the '60s), marched several thousand military veterans, most of them from World War II. In front of them was a small group of young men carrying a banner reading, "Vietnam Veterans Against the War."—VVAW.

While that spring-showered day only witnessed about a dozen men of this new vets group in attendance, within three years more than 50,000 Vietnam veterans would join this movement, actively opposing the war—over half of them combat experienced—officers as well as enlisted men. April 15th, 1967, was the first time in American history that soldiers returned to organize against an ongoing war.

That July, as a non-Vietnam veteran of the 101st Airborne Division (U.S. Army, 1959-61) and chairman of the Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam, I flew to Chicago to meet with one of those young vets who had marched with us in New York City—Jan Barry Crumb. Along

## Book Review

# Vietnam: The Dirty War Told By the Men Who Fought & Opposed It

with veterans from several different cities, we made plans for the development of such groups, both Vietnam vets and others, across the nation.

The most significant by far was to be the VVAW. Back in Detroit we

had already founded the Veterans Against the War, a group which included veterans from all branches of the military since we had few Vietnam vets at that time.

*Winter Soldiers*, a book by historian Richard Stacewicz, is the oral history of the VVAW—men who changed the character of the anti-war movement, a movement whose activists had come mostly from the universities.

The most significant work accomplished by the VVAW was in reaching back to the soldiers themselves. By June 1971, *Detroit News* columnist and military historian, retired colonel Robert Heinl, would make the extraordinary admission that the military in Vietnam was nearing a state of complete collapse.\* What that former officer would not admit was the critical role of opposition by soldiers from that war, and even from within the armed forces itself.

Jan Barry Crumb (who served in Vietnam and then resigned from West Point rather than continue to be a part of the war) asks, "Who's going to tell the history of the Vietnam war?" *Winter Soldiers* helps answer that question. With its easy-to-read, oral-history format, the book documents the struggles of these men, from their pre-induction days, to their experiences in Vietnam, to their contributions to stopping the war and beyond.

In addition to being the point-men of the anti-war movement and the profound influence they had on its mass base and the general public, examples of the accomplishments of the VVAW include: counseling those with post-Vietnam syndrome, a forerunner of the now-recognized Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); the creation of such organizations as Twice Born Men and Swords to Plowshares; and their work in exposing Agent Orange.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War held their own demonstrations as well. Their actions were often outrageous, always

surprising, sometimes funny and sometimes not-so-funny. In public and dramatic protests, and ingenious forms of guerilla theatre, they "invaded" communities giving citizens a mock taste of the war they had fought in Vietnam. They threw their medals back at those who sent them to Vietnam when a fence was erected physically barring them from the halls of Congress; they printed and distributed a variety of underground newspapers and films; established coffee houses outside of military bases and counseled all comers against the draft.

*Winter Soldiers* also documents world events revolving around and shaping these men, the "sea" in which they swam.

While the Vietnamese were forced to fight an anti-colonial war for independence against the United States, their erstwhile ally of World War II, they had to wait another 30 years (1945-75) and suffer three million dead before achieving self-determination.

The only way the war could be waged was to strip young recruits of their critical processes through brutal indoctrination, inculcate them with racial hatred, teach them to obey authority without question, and demonize the Vietnamese. But 2,000 years of struggle by the Vietnamese, the unexpected backlash of radicalization and opposition to the war by the American public (a 1967 Gallup poll showed 52% of Americans opposed the war) and these soldiers brought the U.S. political leadership instead to defeat.

In the beginning of their organizing efforts, VVAW testimony about the brutal norm of that criminal war was mostly met with deaf ears. While the American public was used to taking their doses of sin in religious dollops, they were not prepared to hear the brutality of the war committed by their sons that were sent there.

When the story of My Lai massacre broke in 1969 (belatedly reported by the corporate press), documenting graphically the slaughter of hundreds of Vietnamese women, young children and even infants (the only "enemy" available), it lay bare the American psyche to the reality of that

conflict and the U.S. role in it. The public then listened to these veterans—loud and clear.

In January 1971, the VVAW convened a "Winter Soldier Investigation" in Detroit with the intent of documenting to the public what they knew, had seen and participated in. Their testimony vividly indicted the U.S. political and military leadership that trained and sent them to Vietnam. In the summer of 1972, representatives of the VVAW traveled to the Bertrand Russell War Crimes Tribunal in Paris where they further testified, and embraced the "enemy" they had once fought.

The anti-war vets established direct contacts with the Vietnamese and declared their own peace with documents such as with the Peoples Peace Treaty.

The book also documents several journeys by Vietnam veterans to North Vietnam during the war and the relationship they developed with the Vietnamese. It's well known that American troops refused to fight in growing numbers. What's not generally known is the role of direct opposition within the military, much of it fostered by returned vets.

The work of the VVAW so impressed the Vietnamese political leadership that they issued directives to their commanders and troops in the field not to fire on American soldiers who wore paraphernalia of protest or carried their weapons in an upside-down position, part of the VVAW symbol. As the war progressed, there were examples of entire American units in the field signing up for VVAW membership. Little could the small minds that had sown these men (half of who were under the age of 19) in that ancient, fertile and besieged land, realize they would harvest a crop of dragon's teeth in return.

If you've been around the revolutionary block, you'll find *Winter Soldiers* to be a stroll down memory lane, with glances at some facets of that experience long forgotten or others never known.

If you're coming of age as we enter the final years of the twentieth century, you'll be able to see in the men of the VVAW your own reflection, given similar objective circumstances what was done, what could be done, and what it will be necessary to do.

**FE Note:** Nick Medvecky was a civil rights activist (1961-65) in the South and, later, an anti-war coordinator. He covered the VVAW Winter Soldier Investigation for *CREEM* magazine. He is currently serving a federal prison term: #12155-039, P.O. Box 8000, Bradford, PA 16701.

### "This is what we're in Vietnam protecting?"

—from *Winter Soldiers: An Oral History of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War*

**Joe Urgo:** I was not carrying ammunition any more. I decided: if the shit gets hot again, I'm running: I'm not going to kill. By the end of the year, the attitude among the troops was so rebellious that nobody was wearing their helmets anymore. We weren't saluting the officers. The base police were given orders to write up all the guys coming off the night shift if they did not have their helmets on and if they didn't salute the officers. Now



1970 VVAW March. —FE file photo

Continued on Page 28

\*This highly recommended essay is available in the Winter 1990 Fifth Estate for \$2 from the FE office.

## Recent Books on Genetic Engineering Technology Against Nature

**O**n 28th September last, a group of unknown people approached a field in County Carlow, Ireland, with malicious intent. They proceeded to tear apart an acre of sugar beets, then disappeared back into the night from which they came.

The field was the property of Teagasc, a semi-state agricultural research organization. The catchily-branded Roundup Ready Sugar Beet that was destroyed had grown from seed provided by the U.S. multinational, Monsanto. (See p.2) The sabotage was claimed by the Gaelic Earth Liberation Front.

The sabotage recalls images from the past of other agrarian groups that moved at night to inflict peasant justice with names like the White Boys or the Ribbon Men.

This action was another front in a global struggle over the control of food supply currently being waged. It is seen in the continual destruction of subsistence production, and the application of high-technology to and commodification of basic foodstuffs.

It is also part of a struggle against the introduction of biotechnology, what capital expects to replace current chemical process technology. A November 1995 article in the *Economic and Political Weekly* stated, "According to the projections of several reputed institutions, biotechnology is slated to account for almost 60 to 70 percent of the global economy for the next two to three decades... biotechnology covers a span of economic sectors which is unprecedented. It will play a role in fields as diverse as mining, feedstock chemicals, energy, pharmaceuticals and of course food."

And, surprise, surprise: this biotechnology sector will be almost entirely in the hands of the world's ten to twelve largest multinational corporations.

The Australian pamphlet *Colonizing the Seed: Genetic Engineering and Techno-Industrial Agriculture* concisely puts forward reasons for concern over the introduction of genetically engineered seeds. Author Gyorgy Scrinis argues, "that

genetic engineering represents a continuation, indeed an intensification, of the technico-industrial approach to agricultural production, and the social inequalities, concentrations of power/wealth, and ecological problems it has produced."

While this account is good on the process of commodification involved in this development, it lacks details of who is monopolizing the seed business. For the carve-up of the global seeds business that is the background against which genetically engineered seeds are being introduced, Scrinis' work should be supplemented by P.R. Mooney's classic *Seeds of the Earth: A Private or Public Resource?* (Ottawa: Inter Pares) Although much of Mooney's information is now dated, its concentration on corporate maneuverings is bang on target.

On a more anecdotal and less theoretical basis, Robin Mather's *Garden of Unearthly Delights: Bioengineering and the Future of Food* (Dutton) looks at changes in U.S. food production and consumption and how they have moved from raw reality to a situation where everything is processed. Mather, a striking *Detroit Free Press* food writer (FE note: recently called back to work at the scab gulag), examines dairy, tomato and chicken production, and compares corporate methods of production with alternative, humane methods. Her book, which has a useful index and list of resources, ends by arguing for a new approach to food. Back to the garden and the kitchen, folks: you know it makes sense.—Tomas MacSheoin

Note: The Scrinis title is available from Anti-Genetic Engineering Collective, 312 Smith St. Collingwood, 3066, Melbourne, Australia. Tomas MacSheoin's *Poisoning Asia: The Relocation of Toxic Technologies* from North to South, is forthcoming from The Other India Press, (Mapusa 403 507 Goa, India).



FE File Photo/J. Berndt

*In TERRORgation: The CIA's Secret Manual on Coercive Questioning*, edited by Jon Elliston and Charles Overbeck, illustrated, Parascope, 1430 Willamette, #329, Eugene OR 97401, 56pp., \$5.95 or [www.parascope.com](http://www.parascope.com)

**O**ne anniversary you may have missed in 1997 was the 50-year anniversary of the birth of the Central Intelligence Agency, the secret government organization principally devoted to waging covert state terrorism. To put the spotlight on this repressive legacy, Parascope, a small publisher, has released the previously classified 1963 *KUBARK Counterintelligence Interrogation*. (KUBARK is the CIA's code name). Thanks is due to Elliston and Overbeck for helping make available this chilling manual used in the agency's long-hidden crimes.

Although certain sentences remained blacked out in the name of CIA (in)security, there's plenty of terrifying technical instruction stated clearly and unambiguously for anyone wondering about the mentality within this darkest of agencies. The manual lists, in chillingly detached bureaucratic language how to extract de-

sired information through the use of sensory deprivation, pain, electric shock, hypnosis and drugs.

It would be a mistake to dismiss this publication as just a tragic Vietnam footnote or an institutionalized strokebook for curious sadists.

In a section titled, "Coercive Counterintelligence Interrogation of Resistant Sources" (uncooperative types), the description of the methodical use of force in getting difficult information is quite disturbing.

There are also lengthier sections detailing considerable information on non-coercive methods of interrogation now favored by modern law enforcement agencies throughout the world.

Although, the manual was designed primarily for search and destroy missions during foreign wars, if one simply replaces the prisoner-of-war terminology of "interrogatee" with "detainee" or "suspect," then the non-physical techniques listed are easily transferable to more common run-ins with local law enforcement.

The following instruction from the manual could be used at the neighborhood precinct no less than half a world away: "The non-coercive interrogation is not conducted without pressure. On the contrary, the goal is to generate maximum pressure, or at least as much as is needed to induce compliance. The difference is that the pressure is generated inside the interrogatee. His resistance is sapped, his urge to yield is fortified, until in the end he defeats himself."

Although it's well known that interrogation is part of the job description for police, seldom has its brutality been presented so frankly for public scrutiny. Digest this information for those dreaded encounters you hope you'll never have. Parascope's CIA Interrogation manual is the next best thing to having a lawyer present (or a get-out-of-jail free pass).

—Bill Blank

## book reviews

### Unabomber continued from page 2

One didn't have to be a thoroughly conditioned megamachine clone to see Kaczynski's gratuitous grudge bombings as proof that he was not entirely sane. But as Finnegan shrewdly comments, the self-evident madness of sending bombs through the mail, or leaving them in public places, or planting them on airplanes (in the latter case, apparently, because their noise outraged him) cannot be used as evidence of insanity since those acts are the crimes themselves. Of course, we must also always remind ourselves, "sane" compared to whom? Designers of "smart bombs," or military scientists who willfully spread nuclear radiation in secret weapons tests, or researchers trying to map the genetic code to harness it for science, or industry flacks paid to disprove global warming? Articles on the trial in *The New York Times* were frequently positioned on the page with a dark irony. For example, below the continuation of its December 9, 1997 article on the trial was a small item reporting that increased ultraviolet rays

caused by atmospheric ozone loss may be causing the worldwide disappearance of amphibians; and next to a continuation of an article on the sanity controversy in the January 8 issue was a photo story on a fatal explosion and fire at an explosives factory.

If we can now say with assurance that Kaczynski was the Unabomber, his career as an anti-tech guerrilla is even more questionable than it seemed before his identity was known. To give one example: some time after his attempt to get into a grad program was humiliatingly rebuffed by an arrogant professor at the Chicago Circle campus of the University of Illinois, he planted his first bomb there. Kaczynski then recklessly bombed universities for a while, with a swipe at an airliner and at Boeing Corporation, but he managed to injure mostly secretaries and students. His first fatality killed a computer retail store owner (a powerful director of the megatechnic pyramid, to be sure).

Kaczynski's handful of supporters and his defense committee (who spent his initial incarceration arguing that it was physically impossible for him to carry out the bombings), will now surely justify his

acts by declaring all of us guilty, from imperial administrators down to the fellow at the hot dog stand. Others will naturally be troubled by poor Kaczynski's admitted lifelong lack of affect, his rage and resentment, and his notable ability to confabulate and confuse his undeniable personal calamities with a far larger and more serious social crisis. This seems indeed to be how the warped contemporary version of the idea that "the personal is political" now works—a noxious failure of both reasoning and feeling now plaguing an ostensibly radical milieu that under other circumstances might have become truly, and in a life-affirming way, revolutionary. Contrary to the ingenuous (if callous) notion that the Unabomber has initiated crucial and heretofore nonexistent discussions about the nature of mass technics, "FC" only managed to contribute to such a discussion's marginalization and trivialization by the very media that made the hooded Unabomber figure a kind of darkly comic culture anti-hero.

At some point recently I noticed that the shorthand of my notes on Theodore Kaczynski referred to him simply as "K," thus bringing Kafka's protagonist in *The Trial* to mind along with the dystopian novels of Orwell and Huxley.

This sad and angry man's motives remain obscure, and one shudders to think what kind of theories he will offer to his coterie, but his danse macabre with the U.S. injustice system, another travesty in a long and sordid history, has earned him our human sympathy as a victim of the technobureaucratic machinery toward which he focused some legitimate insight and rage. Nevertheless, long before Mr. K's misguided terror campaign, the dire threat posed to humanity and global life-web by industrial capitalism was becoming clear to growing numbers of people.

It remains the historic obligation of this and coming generations to reorient human societies toward life. But doing so requires minimally that we recognize the difference between mere symptoms of crisis and those subjective and objective conditions that might lead to authentic transformation. The Unabomber's campaign and his cheerleaders are sad indications of how much remains to be done.



## News & Reviews

Reviews by Allan Antliff unless noted

**U**ncontrollables vs the Grotesque Frame-Up Against Anarchists in Italy: Dossier, 1997 documents the Italian government's efforts to target Italy's anarchist movement using the confession of an activist's former lover. The government is using her testimony to pin numerous unsolved kidnappings, bank robberies, and direct actions (attacks on energy pylons, etc.) on over 50 anarchists.

Authorities have raided numerous homes, anarchist centers, bookstores and publications in their quest for evidence. A trial which began last summer focused on four anarchists who were caught in 1994 robbing a bank—Alfredo Bonanno, Jean Weir, Carlo Tesserri, and Christos Stratigopoulos.

Weir and others publish Elephant Editions books and the Bratash Dubh pamphlet series (available in English through AK distribution) which offer important theoretical perspectives on anarchist strategies of resistance (affinity groups, illegalism, sabotage) as well as penetrating analyses of the evolution of capitalism and new possibilities for revolution opening up. For a copy, write B.M. Ignition, London, WC1N 3XX, England.

**R**able Review: *Encouraging a Healthy Disrespect for Authority*, Summer 1997, (PO Box 4710, Arlington, VA 22204; \$4) is a new anarchist quarterly edited by Tom Wheeler.

Its purpose is to "call into question every form of corporate domination in our daily lives"—surely a tall order given the pervasive influence of totalitarian institutions. This issue covers fast-food restaurant behavior modification, the political "feudalism" of American public life at the hands of corporations, the co-optation of the internet as a business tool, and an exchange between two punk bands, one of which ("Padded Cell") is sliding into corporate status at a rapid clip.

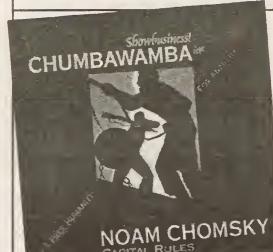
**W**ar Crime #5 (1997), PO Box 2741 Tucson, AZ 85702 USA; \$2; irregular.

This is an odd mix. Among other things we get a Mumia update, a circular from the Polish Anarchist Black Cross, two band interviews, a "How to Make Tofu" feature, and obscure zine reviews. The journal lacks focus, and it shows.

(Note by Peter Werbe on *War Crime* #7: This issue contains the focus Allan felt #5 lacked. It features an interview with a member of the Black Autonomy collective, a history of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, news of Daishowa's war on the Lubicon people, vegan recipes, and more to make a nicely rounded issue.)

Continued on page 25

# Fifth Estate Books



## Chumbawamba: Back Before They Was Fab

CHUMBAWAMBA / NOAM CHOMSKY

"For A Free Humanity: For Anarchy"

A double CD featuring the now-famous pop band from Leeds (see P.1) on disc 1. "Showbusiness" was recorded live in 1994 and contains their best pre- "Tubthumping" anarchist material. Previously available only as a limited edition expensive import. Disk 2 is a Chomsky lecture—"Capital Rules"—a portrait of a two-tier society with islands of wealth in a sea of poverty. A 24-page booklet is included with extensive interviews with Chomsky and the band.

AK Press Double CD & Booklet \$18

## New Titles

TROTSKYISM & MAOISM: THEORY & PRACTICE IN FRANCE & THE U.S.

by A. Belden Fields

A comprehensive analysis of the aims, programs, platforms and day-to-day (sur)realities of the authoritarian Trottskyist and Maoist groups plaguing the planet.

Autonomedia 363pp. \$10.00

HOPPING FREIGHT TRAINS IN AMERICA

by Duffy Littlejohn

Presents a lively and exhaustive account of the author's travels all over the U.S. coupled with an incredible wealth of information concerning not only the techniques, dangers and thrills of riding but also railroad lore, history and North American bohemiania.

Sand River 352pp. \$14.00

BASIC BAKUNIN

by Anarchist Communist Federation

An overview and examination of some of Bakunin's central theories & ideas. A good, clear, concise introduction to Mikhail Bakunin and his vision of anarchy.

Paterson @ Collective 16p. \$1.00

FIRST & LAST EMPERORS: THE ABSOLUTE STATE & THE BODY OF THE DESPOT.

by Kenneth Dean & Brian Massumi

Exploratory philosophic prose detailing the strange and suggestive parallels between the ancient despotic empires of China with the Reagan/Bush empire of the 1980s.

Autonomedia 208pp. \$6.00

ABC OF ANARCHISM

by Alexander Berkman

An introduction to classic anarchist communism written in a clear, eloquent, simple style following Berkman and Emma Goldman's disillusionment with the Bolshevik counter-revolution.

Freedom Press 86pp. \$4

THIS WORLD WE MUST LEAVE & OTHER ESSAYS

by Jacques Camatte

Camatte straightforwardly calls leftist po-

litical organizations and labor unions "rackets." He depicts a voracious Capital endowed with anthropomorphic needs requiring the domestication of humans. The stand-off between Capital vs. The Earth gives a context for evaluating ecological devastation. Camatte helped us to definitively leave the Progress bandwagon.

Autonomedia 256pp. \$9

LIVING MY LIFE Vol I & II

by Emma Goldman

The turbulent autobiography of a woman at the center of the century's major events. Although her life intersected with the famous figures of the era, it is the day-to-day struggles for anarchy which make this account come alive. This is the original two-volume edition first published in 1931.

Dover 993pp (2 volumes) \$18

HAVING LITTLE, BEING MUCH: A CHRONICLE OF FREDDY PERLMAN'S FIFTY YEARS

by Lorraine Perlman

A remembrance of a friend, and the times and the Detroit community in which he lived. "Lorraine's direct and unadorned style lets Freddy's life speak for itself; one cannot help but see it as exemplary." —FE Review

Black & Red 155pp. \$5

ECO-DEFENSE: A FIELD GUIDE TO MONKEYWRENCHING

edited by

Dave Foreman and Bill Haywood

This new, revised and enlarged third edition contains everything the wilderness defender needs to know about how to disable, dismantle, and destroy the machinery, buildings and vehicles, etc. of those who are raping the earth for profit. Sabotage techniques are richly detailed with diagrams, first hand accounts and "field notes."

Ned Ludd Books 311pp. \$20

THE LAST DAYS OF CHRIST THE VAMPIRE

by J.G. Eccarius

One of the most blasphemous books we have seen since the classics of sacrilege. The book jacket states: "His power grew over the ages. Enslaving minds and bodies through both religious hierarchies and direct telepathic control.

M.I.T. Press 386pp. \$11

**Fifth Estate Books** is located at 4632 Second Avenue, just south of W. Forest, in Detroit, in the same space as the Fifth Estate Newspaper. Hours vary, so please call before coming by.

### HOW TO ORDER BY MAIL

- 1) List the title of the book, quantity, and the price of each; 2) add 10% for mailing costs—not less than \$1.24 U.S. or \$1.60 foreign (minimum for 4th class book rate postage); 3) total; 4) write check or money order to: **Fifth Estate**; 5) mail to: **Fifth Estate**, 4632 Second Ave., Detroit MI 48201 USA. Phone 313/831-6800 for hours and more information.

## OBJECTIVITY & LIBERAL SCHOLARSHIP

by Noam Chomsky

Introduction by Peter Werbe

Taken from Chomsky's 1969 *American Power and the New Mandarins*, this thin volume exposed his colleagues' cooperation with the imperial slaughter in Southeast Asia. Written while the Vietnam war was raging, he demonstrates how the same ideology distorts the work of scholars who analyzed earlier conflicts. His critique of historians of the Spanish Revolution and Civil War includes a stirring account of the anarchist participation which is either ignored or falsified by liberals and Stalinists alike. This is the best short history of the Spanish anarchists' triumphs and defeats.

Black & Red 142pp \$6

## TIMBER WARS

by Judi Bari

These are some of the essays that played a role in radicalizing a generation of ecology activists. Essays and interviews on Redwood Summer and the bombing which crippled Bari, on the split in Earth First!, on life in the timber mills, on mainstream environmental betrayals of the grassroots movement, on "the feminization of Earth First!," on monkeywrenching and the decision to renounce tree-spiking, and much more. Proceeds from sale of this book go to the Redwood Justice Fund to continue Judi's and Darryl Cherney's lawsuit against the FBI for complicity in the 1990 car bombing.

Common Courage Press 344 pp. \$15

## PEOPLE WITHOUT GOVERNMENT An Anthropology of Anarchism

by Harold Barclay

"Ten thousand years ago everyone was an anarchist," writes Barclay in this engaging book. Barclay covers anarchy among hunter-gatherers, gardeners, herders, agriculturalists and even moderns. He has reservations about primal societies (we would probably disagree with some fundamentals in his description). Yet his "anarcho-cynicalist point of view"—that anarchy may never be attained, and thus "[t]he battle is forever"—is undogmatic, and his citations interesting and appealing.

Kahn & Averill 162pp. \$12.95

## BEYOND BOOKCHIN: Preface for a Future Social Ecology

by David Watson

Besides providing a thorough critique of Murray Bookchin's narrow version of social ecology, this wide-ranging essay explores new paths of thinking about radical ecological politics. "A brilliant, carefully argued critique [which] will do much to restore social ecology's promise as a broad, liberatory vision."—John Clark. "Bookchin is the Elmer Fudd of North American anarchism, and Watson is the Bugs Bunny."—Hakim Bey.

Black & Red/Autonomedia 256pp. \$8.00

## SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL ANTHOLOGY

translated & edited by Ken Knabb

A compendium of writings by the influential Situationist International group. Included are texts preceding the group's formation, soundtracks from Guy Debord's avant-garde films, flyers dating from May 1968 and internal I.S. exchanges.

Bureau of Public Secrets 406pp. \$15

## MEMOIRS OF A REVOLUTIONIST by Peter Kropotkin

Kropotkin's best known work and one of the great works of revolutionary literature. In it he brings alive the ferment of ideas and movements in the Europe of the late 19th century. If one wishes to know what it was like to be a revolutionary when it meant hounding, Siberia, imprisonment or death, here is the book. Dover Publication 557pp \$12

For a complete list of available FE issues, send an SASE, or request it with your book order.

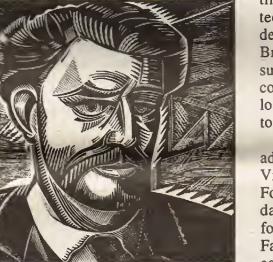
## NEWS & REVIEWS

Continued from page 24

*Melancholic Tragedy* No. 1 (397/1996), Box MT, 121 Raitton Road, Heme (the Hunter) Hill, London, SE24, UK is bilingual (English/Arabic), focusing on Iran by combating the mullahs with ribald humor and the pre-industrial paganism of both East and West. Unfortunately, the articles aren't very coherent or well-written. Lengthy attention to the Kami-Kazi militarization of pre-industrial Japan or the Zanj slave revolts in medieval Persia pull up short when the authors attempt to draw conclusions relevant for the present day.

*Earth First! Action Update*, #42 (September 1997), Dept. 29, 1 Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1HW, UK, is packed with information, contact addresses, and news of ongoing campaigns, including numerous successful ones. More to the point, you can keep abreast of important international actions (Shell Oil protests, for example) and new, innovative direct action tactics being employed in the UK.

It also includes an excellent primer on the advantages of affinity groups, which offer a "non-hierarchical, participatory, flexible and friendly" means of organizing attuned to anarchist principles.



"Errico Malatesta" from *Designs for Anarchist Postage Stamps* featuring 16 portraits of libertarian activists by Clifford Harper & afterword by Colin Ward. From Rebel Press, available from Left Bank Books and AK Press.

*Class War*, (Summer 1997) 50 pp/\$2.00; PO Box 467, London E83QX UK

This edition announces itself as the final issue and the dissolution of the organization of the same name. Whenever I encounter proclamations regarding the dissolving of a revolutionary project, I am always struck by the paradoxical nature of the act: the ideas that gave birth to the project necessitate the project itself be dissolved!

The majority of UK's anarchist Class War Federation responded to its apparent stagnation, hierarchy, "platform" bickering, and little growth by deciding to disband. They hope this will lead to new ideas for collaborative work that can move Class War's politics "beyond the shadow of the left."

So what are these politics? The Class War Federation always put the working-class on the front burner of its program, but beyond this there was confusion as the organization sought to shape this class in their own revolutionary image. In effect, Class War carved out a ghetto of correct "working-class" politics, in part by pillorying anarchist organizations that made no claim to be class-based, such as Earth First!, for so-called "lifestyle leftism."

Ironically, Class War generated its own

puritanical brand of "lifestyle" (macho "working-class" violence) along with leftism of the worst sort. Fixated on a pseudo-Marxist program of working-class separation, the organization failed to recognize the full range of anti-capitalist struggles underway, and this failure led straight to the full-blown sectarianism that lies at the root of its problems.

That said, I still admire Class War for what it achieved over its short span of existence and lament the organization's demise. But then, I may be speaking too soon—apparently the minority faction based in London continues to operate and put out a paper.

**FE Note: Yes, Allan, they're baaack!**  
The new *Class War* can be had for a donation and a SAE from BM Box 5538, London WC1N 3XX, UK.

*Earth First! Journal* (November-December, 1997) PO Box 1415, Eugene OR 97440. \$4.00 Can/\$3.50 US.

This issue contains informative exposés of the devastating environmental implications of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, NASA's nukes-in-space program, and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation plans to accelerate logging in the Pacific rim.

Various developments in the U.S. and Canada are also featured, such as the gutting of the California Environmental Protection Act and the duplicity of the social-democratic New Democrat government in British Columbia (BC), which claims to support logging reform while clear cuts continue to make up 92 percent of BC logging (with 82 percent cutting right up to the stream banks).

There is a report on the first road blockade ever to disrupt logging-as-usual in Virginia's George Washington National Forest. Another article chronicles the 74-day blockade in Idaho's Cove/Mallard forest, where EF'ers from the Rainbow Family of Love and Light carried out a complex strategy involving the suspension of activists in "co-dependent bipod/ tripods" over the logging roads.

*ContraFlow* c/o 56a Infoshop, 56 Crampton St., London SE17, UK, covers actions in the UK, with "roving correspondents" providing reports on European activities. Each issue has an invaluable calendar listing upcoming events and actions.

European news in this issue describes the disruption of the June 1997 EEC summit in Amsterdam, where anarchists made their presence felt.

There's also a piece on the defense of squats in Berlin, as well as a report from a ContraFlow activist who attended an Anti-Capitalist Economics gathering in Spain.

Back in London, the September 25th International Day of Action in solidarity with the striking Liverpool dockers was kicked off by a "visit" to the home of Gordon Waddle, CEO of Liverpool's Mersyside Docks Company. Then on to the headquarters of the Drake's Temp agency, which recruits scabs for Mersyside.

Additional UK campaigns are featured, including updates on government persecution of animal rights activists.

Even though the immediate threat of nuclear war has diminished, the struggle against the existence of atomic weapons and nuclear power continues. Check out the stalwart quarterly, *The Nuclear Register*, for information about and support

for imprisoned anti-nuclear and anti-war activists. Each issue contains action reports, a calendar of upcoming events, prisoner support information, jail writings and international resistance news. Subs: \$15 yearly; sample on request. Nuclear Register, PO Box 43383, Tucson AZ 85733; nukeresister@igc.org.—PW

*Visions of Freedom*, \$3, PO Box 13, Enmore 2042, Australia. www.cat.atrio.net.au.

The articles in *Visions of Freedom*, a pamphlet intended to recall the 1995 *Visions of Freedom* Anarchist Conference in Sydney, are written with humor, indignation and passion without presenting any party line. Included are critiques of the Australian government's complicity in East Timor, the academic establishment, the media and supporters of national liberation. Enough indignation remains, however, to direct it at other anarchists, for example some queer criticisms of the conference itself.

We find a picture of an accordion-playing faerie nun, Sister Mary Mary Quite Contrary, who livened the Pope's recent visit to Australia during which a Pope-Free Zone was declared. Her colleague, Mother Abby of the Order of Perpetual Indulgence, delivered Sister Mary Mary's paper on Gay Rights, AIDS and sex education at the *Visions/Versions* conference.

The companion volume, *Visions of Freedom*, is unfortunately already out of print. Too bad; Peter McGregor's piece therein cites and thanks authors of insightful statements who have helped him to grasp anarchist visions while trying to make his desires a reality, including Vaneigem's observation, "I live on the edge of the universe and I don't need to feel secure."

I liked your *Visions*, friends. Let's dream together.

—Z. Work

*Social Anarchism* is a thoughtful, un dogmatic journal worth reading and supporting. Issue #24 contains a symposium on "the anarchist agenda" with contributions from Neal Schleuning, Howard Ehrlich and others; an essay by Mike Long entitled "Ebonics, Language and Power"; John Moore's commentary on "Dianamanis"; Sean Burns's moving tribute to David Thoreau Wieck; poetry and more.

Also notable are the reviews, including Susan Packie's piece on publishing wonder woman Freddie Baer's marvelous book of collages and collaborations, *Eccstatic Incisions*, and Kingsley Widmer's review-essay on Murray Bookchin's hideous *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*.

As someone who was vilified by Bookchin's book, I felt extremely gratified by Widmer's level-headed review. Widmer is no luddite primitivist, and has his differences with people Bookchin slams (he even thinks the book has "some good points to score"), but he's judicious enough, and rational enough, to see beyond Bookchin's "self-indulgently irate and egotistical polemic." Widmer clearly has differences with the *Fifth Estate*, but he is someone with whom one might be able to disagree in a comradely manner. His review is a breath of fresh air, perhaps the best all-around review of the Bookchin book.

*Social Anarchism* is good-looking and readable. Single issues are \$4 and subs are \$14/for four issues from 2743 Maryland Ave., Baltimore MD 21218.—David Watson

# Letters to the Fifth Estate



## Fifth Estate Letters Policy

We welcome letters commenting on our articles, stating opinions, or giving reports of events in your area. We don't guarantee to print everything received, but all letters are read by our staff and considered for publication.

Typed letters or ones on disk are appreciated, but not required. Length should not exceed two, double-spaced pages. If you are interested in writing longer responses, please contact us.

## On Terrorism

### Sisters & Brothers:

I received the Fall 1997 issue of the *Fifth Estate* and took note of what Abdul Olugbala Shakur had to say and thought you might want to critique the enclosure entitled, "Terrorism: Some Definitions."

Ojore N. Lutalo  
Trenton NJ

**FE Note:** The imprisoned Shakur objected to the *FE*'s use of the word "terrorism" to denote armed actions against the state. He wrote in part, "It is this type of language that gives credence to the KKoverment's efforts to criminalize the legitimacy of our armed struggle in order to justify our illegal imprisonment..."

The unsigned leaflet sent to us by the also incarcerated Lutalo, quotes approvingly from Che Guevara and from a statement by *Los Macheteros*, a Puerto Rican nationalist armed action group. The latter says in part, "Terrorism is Terrorism, and one must combat White terrorism which is reactionary with Red Terrorism, which is revolutionary..."

From an ethical standpoint there seems to be little legitimacy for violence against any unarmed person; strategically, there appears to be little gained as well. Just more deaths in a bloody century.

**FE Note:** The following letter is a re-

sponse to the objection posed by several women in the Trumbull Theatre Collective that our Summer 1997 cover, drawn by Richard Mock, was sexist or even worse, misogynist. Further discussion is welcome.

### Cover Misogynist?

Dear Fifth Estate:

Your Mother Russia cover [by Richard Mock] (Summer 1997) deserves criticism more for being irrelevant to the subject matter of the articles, the stark struggle for survival of the people in the former Soviet Union, and the women in particular, than for being sexist per se. I found the history of women doing the physical labor with men being idle supervisors particularly interesting. This content is indicated in no way by the cover art. The imagery leaves the bad taste of the regurgitation of undigested Cold War propaganda, so familiar from images of Russia in the mainstream media.

The characterization of "Mother Russia" as a grotesque and deformed beauty queen could have been an accurate characterization of the present glorification of capitalism by the newly rich and gangster elite, if the image was not so indebted to the genealogy of misogynist and anti-communist images of Russian women in the U.S. media since the Russian Revolution. As recently as 1990's Wendy's TV hamburger ad, Russian women were depicted

What is presented as unappealing and a sexual turn-off in one context becomes the epitome of sex appeal in its synthetic form.

Despite the particulars of the iconography within the confines of the U.S.-Soviet saga, the cover image, a grotesque one-eyed woman grabbing at money, perpetuates a misogynist archetype.

Susan Simensky Bietila

(and worth mentioning in the context, of Russian-Jewish ancestry, with a close relative, the former Miss Brighton Beach)

Milwaukee

**Richard Mock replies:** Somewhere a unicorn races towards a giant abyss filled with delights. Humanity passing through a moment in time is really dirty business.

When I was a kid and drew a lot, I thought in a totemistic way. As I made drawings, they became magic icons with the ability to affect changes in the world around me and beyond. All images I drew were metaphysical pictures by just coming into being. I still take advantage of that phenomenon whenever the opportunity presents itself.

I think of images as potent experiential, emotive and meaning machines. What the viewer brings to the image in terms of personal consciousness begins the visual mind exchange that creates meaning. The image fulfills the visual needs of the composition which is the real mechanics that allow for an emotion to occur between you and it.

Your interpretation of the cover image as grotesque and deformed is not the cover image. It's your interpretation of it through the mind filters you carry around. We all carry them.

An image goes out multi-directional and multi-dimensional with layers of potential experiencing to the minds who view it. Your state of being affects the content you perceive.

My linocuts complete themselves in terms of design and beauty. Here are three stories:

1. A new editor at *The New York Times* used to check out my Op-Ed page illustrations with his secretary to see if they could find in the art I submitted any hidden sexual meanings before they okayed them for publication. Oh, yeah, he also thought modern art was a shame and Matisse couldn't draw.

2. I started doing special feature and editorial drawings for the *New York Daily News*. I did an illustration for a piece that in part described the gunning down of a number of city police—sort of psychodrama narrative. I did a linocut of a human skull with guns coming out of its eyes, nose, mouth, etc. That was the last illustration I did for the *Daily News*. An associate editor told me that the president of the NRA called the paper and while not objecting to the article, he felt the illustration



as gauche and garish,

universally ugly—hairy and overly muscled, more suited to pulling plows than being the objects of desire we are all supposed to want to be. It perpetuates the Cold War hoop-la denigrating Eastern Bloc women athletes as androgynous monsters. The stereotypes about the people in the former Soviet Union so skillfully challenged in the articles is contradicted by the cover, undercutting the potential power of the *FE* issue's focus.

How much does the image point at the grabbing at money in the newly capitalist world and how much does it rely on the mockery of the bodies of women hardened by physical labor? Is this something which should be the object of derision in an anarchist publication? How much more hypocritical this put-down has become with the current image of female beauty in the U.S. featuring the faux worker-body achieved by compulsive hours in the gym.

What put guns in a bad light. That linocut print is now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

3. I did a lino art piece for *The Times* illustrating an article by an Air Force colonel who worked at the Pentagon describing how war games were conducted. The officer liked the drawing and a print of it is hanging in the Pentagon. It is very popular, I am told. The following year, at a Veterans parade in New York City, a group of Vietnamese Veterans Against the War marched with a banner announcing their name and using a blow-up of the same linocut image I did for *The Times* Op-Ed piece. Both groups saw the image as emblematic of their point of view and conveying completely opposite content.

I think part of the esthetic of the political cartoon is the ability to create a diversity of meanings that can relate to the vastness of our collective awareness.

As the Syrian cartoonist Ali Fazat said, "I leave it to the readers to decide what they see."

### Sunfrog Kissing

5th Estate:

Either Sunfrog has been out in the sun too long or kissing those frogs that get you high. To lump television, war, drugs, money and work with 12-step programs is ill-informed, irresponsible and *jejune*. (See "The Culture is a Cult," *FE*, Summer 1997.)

What are you, Sunfrog, the untreated adult child of an anarchist? Cults have leaders. Twelve-step groups don't. They are probably the closest thing to anarchy since it died in Madrid.

White Boy

Santa Monica, Calif.

### Save The Humans

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Although your very fine magazine is many things, it seems less about anarchism than it is about ecological concerns. While we love our dogs and all nature, we remain unreconstructed anthropocentrists. Our bumper sticker is: "Save the Humans".

We place equality among men as our highest value. One must focus and prioritize as one arranges one's personal agenda. Our sense of clarity requires us to place the redistribution of income, wealth and power among human beings as a higher priority than any and all ecological matters.

There is no scarcity on the planet that a modest redistribution of income wouldn't solve. A lady on Radio Netherlands suggests a tiny tax of one-tenth or one-hundredth of one percent of all daily oil and/or currency transactions to house, feed and educate all men and women on the planet so they live as well as any bourgeois burgher in Nieuwe Amsterdam (New York City) or Oude Amsterdam.

For a century or more, scarcity has been a myth; yet many modern ecologists continue to rely on the myth of scarcity to scare. Those in power seek to distract us by scaring us with a myth of no meaning. Distracting obscurantism is flack in any man's propaganda model. When compared to the genocide against men in all lands, the ecological concerns are those of the effete dilettante rather than the core concern of anarchists—equality and liberty through the elimination of hierarchical power in society.

### Don't Lose The Fifth Estate

If you move without notifying us directly you will miss your next issue. Even if you file an address change at the Post Office, they will not forward Periodicals mail. Please write before moving and include your old address and zip code.

The Fifth Estate's digression into ecology reflects the two-decade fashion of ecology as portrayed on the cultural screen (Zeitgeist). We believe, as did Herbert Marcuse, that all culture is propaganda.

To our minds, the Fifth Estate continues to inadvertently or intentionally promote the myth of scarcity in the midst of abundant and sufficient wealth.

Grace and Michael Hogan  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

## The Complexity, The Density

Dear Editor(s):

I sympathize with the views expressed by a wide range of writers in the copies of *Fifth Estate* I sampled. I'm not sure about the complexity, the density of the language typically used, though.

If you want to get the "ordinary people" on your side—a laudable enough aim—then they must be able to understand what you are saying.

Many of your articles are couched in "sociology-speak," as it were, practically inaccessible to the generality of readers. I admire writers such as Wendell Berry, Jerry Mander and Neil Postman because of their Orwellian abilities to convey difficult concepts in simple language (often beautifully simple language).

Peter Quince  
Faversham, Kent, UK

## Piecards Unite

Fellow Workers:

Your rather odd article on the AFL-CIO's memorial march for the Detroit newspaper strike was recently called to my attention. I suppose I should be flattered that you felt it necessary to work my name (even if mis-spelled) into a story to which I have only the most tenuous connection. But I am rather saddened by the fact that as you return your attention to the struggles of working people you evidently find it necessary to view the world through the blinkered eyes of the AFL-CIO piecards.

The *Industrial Worker* estimate that 25,000 people marched was based upon personal observation and discussions with several IWW members who saw the march from different vantage points, and is, if anything, rather generous. *Labor Notes*, for example, reported that only "thousands" marched.

No purpose is served by deceiving ourselves about the weakness of our movement or exaggerating our strength. Rather, we must see the world as it is if we are to have any hope of realizing our dreams of what it might be.

Jon Bekken, Editor  
*Industrial Worker*  
Cambridge, Mass.

FE replies: Bekken's ability to count marchers is questionable if he can't accurately read an article about the event. Our report said the official labor movement was incapable of leading struggles even within capital and called for independent action if workers had any chance to win strikes. The story ran with a large photo of marchers holding an IWW banner.

For those unfamiliar with Bekken's arcane 1920s labor lexicon, a piecard is a labor bureaucrat.

This follows their previous attacks on

# The Revenge of Albion: Of Neoists and Green Anarchists

## Readers Respond To David Watson's "Swamp Fever, Primitivism & The Ideological Vortex"

hotting up—and that campaign too included lying accusations in the bourgeois media that Class War were "fascist." *Plus ça change, la même chose!* Indeed, given that neither Home nor Tompsett claim to be anarchists, and as you rightly point out, they frequently denounce anti-fascism, any genuine anti-fascist motivation is lacking on their part.

Speaking of a trilogy of his novels, Home recently stated he is "interested in the relationship between anarchism and fascism as ideologies. There's a structural similarity in the way the two ideologies function and in particular the fetishization of the role of the state in politics and a failure to deal radically with economics—as you go through the three books, your ability to distinguish between the two ideologies becomes more difficult" [Gay Times, August 1997].

Apart from the political illiteracy and insult to anarchists who gave their lives fighting fascism, if Home regards the two as virtually indistinguishable, then he is not in much of a position to criticize anarchists for "fascist" sympathies. Shortly after he published the *Green Apocalypse* twaddle, Tompsett admitted to me and a GA member that he didn't even know what fascism was, that being a matter for "sociologists"—something which hadn't stopped him too smearing GA as "fascist." And so on.

Another feature of Home's "discourse" is homophobia, notwithstanding the two-page plug for him in *Gay Times* quoted above. I am thinking here of the (bogus) short story competition launched by him/Tompsett in 1996, supposedly organized by me, in which beneath a fictitious and evidently exemplary account of gay sex involving me and another anti-fascist called for entries to be "as lewd and malvolent as possible"—illustrating that is how Home/Tompsett perceive gay sex.

Sure enough, the "winning entry" by Home referred to gay people as "turd-burglars," "shit-stabbers," and "Shit-Tifters." While anti-fascist critics of Home have sought to keep things on a political level, Home/Tompsett have rarely ventured out of the sewer of personal abuse—a device to conceal the poverty of their arguments that I am glad to see hasn't fooled Watson.

Watson is also right to zero in on the Neoists' "barren unexamined defense of industrialism," and his comments that GA should seek to explain the theory their practice is based on is correct, although Steve Booth (were he not otherwise detained in prison, as he is) would no doubt argue he has already done this in his two publications *Politics & the Ethical Void* and *Love is Not Enough* (both available from GA).

As an ally of GA, but not an anarchist myself, I would also observe that your comments on the occasional incautious and counter-productive use of language by GA is a point well-made, and I hope they take this comradely criticism to heart. Any connection of Home/Tompsett to any kind of left politics is tenuous and artificial—whereas the sycophantic adoration by Home of the undeniably fascist ex-National Front member Tony Wakeford is beyond any doubt. The output of Home/Tompsett is hardly, as Watson correctly deduces, "satire," it is disinformational sewage that consciously seeks to serve the state's purposes.

There is a need to improve the level of genuine political debate in the radical milieu, and it is to be hoped that the various points made by Watson will be addressed by all who call themselves "primitivist." Or indeed those who don't—the failure of other anarchists to engage constructively with GA's ideas is a great pity. But debate of a serious nature about how to advance progressive politics isn't something the "Neoists" are interested in or even capable of—their talents are far more venal, a blend of the techniques of Goebbels with the veracity of Stalin.

Larry O'Hara  
Notes from the Borderland  
BM Box 4769  
London WC1N3XX UK

FE Note: The Winter 1997-98 issue of *Notes from the Borderland* is available from the above address for £2.50.

## Futile Practice

Dear Fifth Estate:

It was with great effort that I waded through David Watson's "Swamp Fever..." (FE Fall 1997); I was perpetually bogged down in his convoluted style. Still, I must congratulate Watson on drawing his line of anathema with little of the Bookchinesque mean-spiritedness I'd expected after certain tidbits in the Summer issue (though Watson should get over his grudge against John Zerzan) and must thank him for making it clear that when Fifth Estate wrote critically about the dialectic of civilization and empire this was not intended as a theoretical tool for creating an insurgent praxis aimed at the destruction of civilization.

It was apparently intended as some sort of metaphor to inform a futile practice of "new" left style community organizing married to radical environmentalism.

It is interesting to note that it usually seems to be the humble, tolerant, patient radicals who end up excommunicating the extremists—but then that simply follows in the footsteps of christian history—the religion whose servile values Watson wants us extremists to practice.

For the destruction of civilization and the exploration of new ways of living,  
Wolfi Lanstreicher  
New Orleans

## Not Humbled

Dear FE:

It wasn't "humbling" [to us that] you read the documents we sent you—the Neoist attacks on *Green Anarchist* are important because of the "invisible dictatorship" they've extended through UK's Type 3 milieu since the 1980s and because of their State links—but close the debate,



if you will.

It's naughty of you to suggest we support everything listed in *GA*'s community resistance diary when you know "acts of community breakdown are also listed as well as clear acts of community resistance; both are harbingers of the coming collapse of authority and civilization." And if even Malthusianism isn't "fascistic," why are all violent acts of resistance? *GA* doesn't "distribute the early writings of Richard Hunt," incidentally, except a few inoffensive posters.

If we're "forging a tendency to carry out civilization's destruction," isn't *FE* doing the same by putting forward your analyses of it? Apparently not. "It is one thing to write critically about the dialectic of civilization and empire" and another to actually do something about it. The difference is three years, how long three *GA* editors got last week. They just wrote too, actually, but didn't confine themselves to safe areas like "re-creating community" with neighbourhood singalongs and home-grown lentils. All that's fine, but as *MOVE* discovered, if it's working, the State bombs you.

We did all that in the 1980s, along with PC moralism, economism, ideological rigidity, "third world revolutions" and other Hunt stuff. We've concluded the only way to make space to be human is to get the State off our backs, worming away at the edges for respite where we can—culturally, economically &c—and knock-out punches to the infrastructure where we can't. "Macho militarism?" We're not surrendering ourselves as a military structure or any-thing and if all resistance beyond back sales is gonna inevitably re-create Leviathan, we might as well top ourselves now or, worse, get jobs.

Watson doesn't like Fredy Perlman in the same *Into The 1990s* chapter as the Unabomber. We bet he likes being in that chapter himself even less. While there's still Feds, anyway. Like being Walter Pater, Dave? We can't be anti-civ resisters as he's not sprinkled his ideological holy water on us or rather he's trying to pull the plug now it's getting stormy, out of his control.

This "I am not a Watsonist" routine fools no-one. Another grand ol' man did it last century and founded the biggest secular religion going. John Moore can speak for himself, but the attack on his *Primer* sounded like "no catechism but mine" to us. All this about "nuanced diversity" &c what Watson doesn't like is heresy against his sacred scripture. That's why he appended a loyalty test to his article on what most showed him up as a hippie, the sacred. Alienation shouldn't be worshipped, it should be destroyed. We're not gonna do that by reviving animism or liberal "do unto others" BS because Power just don't work that way.

Yours for the destruction of Civilization,  
John Conner  
Oxford Green Anarchists, UK

## Butthead Disses Cakehead

Dear Fifth Estate:

While I was pleased David Watson took a public position on both *Green Anarchist* and John Moore in his "Swamp Fever" article (*Fifth Estate*, Fall 1997), I felt that at times he indulged in gross misrepresentation.

More than half of *The Green Apocalypse*—one of the publications Watson was allegedly reviewing—is taken up with documents produced by diverse hands, and yet Watson quotes from these without explaining what they are. For example, failing to identify his source as a reprinted leaflet entitled *The Sordid Truth About Stewart Home*—in which it is ludicrously claimed that I have sex with animals and the politics espoused by *Green Anar-*

"Swamp Fever" to read the pamphlet. To take just one example, I do not intend to waste my time by repeatedly explaining how a satirical leaflet attributed to a non-existent Green Action Network is not an example of "forgeries claiming to be from Green Anarchists." It is, however, amusing to speculate that it was the similarity between the parodic leaflet and the politics espoused by *Green Anar-*

chist

lic line of the current editors of *Green Anarchist* is that Hunt held left-wing views prior to the Gulf War, before inexplicably turning fascist overnight. This position appears to have been adopted because in texts such as *Green Anarchism: Its Origins And Influences*, the current editors of *Green Anarchist* use Hunt's theories as an ideological framework for their ongoing activities.

Watson misrepresents the positions of all those involved in the dispute he is writing about. To deal thoroughly with the many errors "Swamp Fever" contains would take more time than I am prepared to devote to the task. Besides, it is pointless attempting to engage Watson in debate since his rhetoric is even more ridiculous than that of an old tailors dummy which I keep in the attic and which I sometimes put out on the pavement, so that I can crawl inside it. Thus hidden, I frighten passing pedestrians with my hamster impersonations, while shying lone and languid peanuts down the street. After reading "Swamp Fever" and "On The Road To Nowhere," I consider this hobby considerably more serious than the *Fifth Es-*

teate

Indeed, Watson's absurd posturing has

earned him the nickname Cakehead here

in London. He clearly hasn't learnt his A,

B, C of revolution because if he had, he'd

know that the slogan "Long Live Death"

was chanted not only by Spanish Falangists

but also by those defending the Paris bar-

riades in 1848.

Personally, I prefer the variant of this

slogan that runs "Long Live Life."

Finally, if you wish to print this letter, it

should be run in full with the heading

"Elementary My Dear Watson."

Yours faithfully,  
Stewart Home  
London UK

## Cozy Ghetto

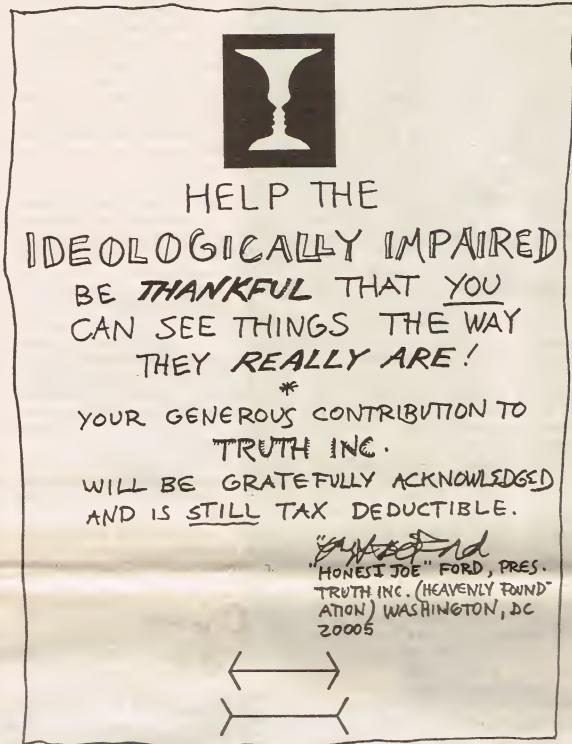
Dear FE:

It is a lamentable commonplace that radicals all too often expend more energy lashing out at one another over relatively minor differences, rather than opposing the common enemy. David Watson's "Swamp Fever" sadly confirms this truism.

I could spend time engaging in amateur psychologising about Watson's motives for attacking me and the British green anarchists, but what would be the point? This would merely increase the bad blood and ill-feeling. But it is worthwhile thinking about what outcome Watson hopes to achieve by taxing us with all manner of errors.

Are we to beat our breasts and repent? Promise to mend our ways? Apologize for daring to deviate from the correct line as set out by David Watson? "Swamp Fever" is replete with Watson's usual proprietorialism over certain ideas, people and places—i.e., the very things of which he accuses Bookchin in *Beyond Bookchin*. Has "Pope" Watson spent too much time mulling over the remains of "Dean" Bookchin?

Watson has difficulties with the term anarcho-primitivism (although curiously, not with either anarchist or primitivist!). So do I, and the opening of my *Primitivist Primer* carefully qualifies my use of this term. These qualifications are dismissed by Watson out of hand. Watson is correct in warning against codification, system-



that Murray Bookchin is one of my pen names—Watson claims Bookchin "is cited approvingly by the Neoists in *Green Apocalypse*."

The notion of approval is a completely inappropriate description of the way in which the Bookchin quote is used, and Watson makes no attempt to establish who authored the piece. It is telling that Watson should attempt to conflate "the Neoists" with Bookchin, despite the fact that his ongoing dispute with this anarchist-bore is of little interest to me or any of my acquaintances. Likewise, Watson cites the ridiculous assertion that "Syndicalism shows that it is possible to have a complex industrial society without hierarchies" from an anonymous leaflet reprinted in the documents section if it proved that "the crux of the Neoist argument is simply a barren, unexamined defense of industrialism and mass technology."

Watson seems to agree with some of the arguments I have made about the right-wing nature of Hunt's ideology but the word "explicitly" is misleading. My view is that Hunt's positions have always been right-wing regardless of the fact that he still claims to be a part of the political left. Likewise, from material reprinted in *The Green Apocalypse*, it is clear that the pub-

lic line of the current editors of *Green Anarchist* is that Hunt held left-wing views prior to the Gulf War, before inexplicably turning fascist overnight. This position appears to have been adopted because in texts such as *Green Anarchism: Its Origins And Influences*, the current editors of *Green Anarchist* use Hunt's theories as an ideological framework for their ongoing activities.

atization and vulgarization, but these are the very things I am at pains to guard against in the *Primer*.

Watson ignores the anarchist precedents for the *Primer* (e.g., Malatesta's *Fra Contadini Dialogues* or Berkman's *ABC of Anarchism*) as well as the inevitably generalized nature of such introductory texts. The fact that the *Primer* aims to achieve a goal which others (including *Fifth Estate*) have signally failed to attain—diffusing anarchist primitivist perspectives beyond the radical fringe—is not even acknowledged. But then again, once one has established one's niche within the cozy anarchist ghetto, who wants to imperil one's position there? Certainly not Watson! God forbid that there might actually be such a thing as "militant primitivism" (Watson's words)—i.e., that people might act upon these impulses rather than merely play intellectual games with them.

There may well be flaws in my *Primer* and "City Primeval." I am the first to acknowledge that. But, given that they at least take seriously and treat sympathetically ideas and practices developed in part by *Fifth Estate* and in Detroit, do they deserve such a hostile reception? Do they not deserve any credit? The answer, of course, is no. Rather than engage in comradeship, Watson treats me (and the green anarchists) as hostiles who need to be repelled and condemned. Taxing us with being simultaneously derivative and deviant, Watson prefers to concoct a Neoist-style fantasy that we are conspiratorially cooking up a political tendency or ideological racket.

No one should be surprised by any of this nonsense. As the *Fifth Estate* continues to retreat from its anti-civilization critique of the late 70s/early 80s, and as Watson shifts further towards that leftist/reformist abomination, social ecology, those who continue along the anti-civilization trajectory—on whatever side of the Atlantic (or anywhere else)—are likely to be reviled.

The saddest thing about this whole business is that the *FE* staff—without even bothering to investigate the issues—sees fit to endorse Watson's position by penning a supportive introduction to "Swamp Fever." Some of us will continue to contest the totality (or Leviathan, or civilization, the megamachine, or whatever terminology you prefer). Sadly, it seems at present that *Fifth Estate* will no longer be with us—and if Watson's essay is any indication, will in fact be against us.

In genuine sorrow,  
John Moore  
Rickmansworth, Herts, England

**Watson replies:** If nothing else, the letters above, from *Green Anarchist* editor John Conner, Neoist egocrat Stewart Home, and (as he has been christened by *Green Anarchist*) "leading British Primitivist" John Moore, painfully illustrate the intellectual poverty of the milieu my "farewell to primitivism" described. Despite the angry letters, I believe I went to great lengths to sort out the GA/Neoist controversy fairly and to defend Green Anarchists from Neoist slanders, before going on to what I consider the larger issues.

I also felt a need to distance my own *FE* work from *Green Anarchist* and self-described anarcho-primitivists, and to raise some questions about their perspectives

(and anarcho-primitivism in general), questions that I think were measured and fair, even if I took a few (well deserved, I still maintain) sarcastic shots at what I consider particularly objectionable Green Anarchist/primitivist utterances. For their part, anarcho-primitivists are apparently not satisfied with anything less than complete, uncritical devotion; for honestly raising important differences with people whose ideas I find dubious and even offensive (and who after all advertise my own writing in their literature as somehow representative of or influential on their current), I'm accused of defending a "sacred scripture." I'm not even allowed to defend my own views; criticism and debate are automatically perceived as attack and the counter-attacks begin. (I can't resist pointing out John Moore's inability to recognize the difference between hostile condemnation and honest criticism. He's surprised that the *FE* might treat the claims of those who think themselves "with" us with the same skepticism we examine those who clearly are not—the same process of inquiry to which we have subjected ourselves. But if there is, "strictly speaking . . . no anarcho-primitivism," as he wrote in his primer, what does he expect? He should be glad he didn't get into an argument with us during our radical high point—according to him—in the beginning of the 1980s; we were a lot harsher and a little less fair, I suspect, toward those with whom we disagreed in those days.)

I may have been inaccurate in reporting that *Green Anarchist* has relied too much on the early role and ideas of a founder who has turned fascist, Richard Hunt. It nevertheless does seem that Hunt gets far too much attention in their various histories (even as his career demonstrates my point that primitivism, like other transgressive responses to repressive civilization, is not immune to the seductions of authoritarianism and the possibility of ethical collapse). Why don't they scrap everything to do with him once and for all and start their discussions of primitivism, say, with the Diggers? Why is he anything more than a footnote? (And why are they so interested in publishing histories of their movement at all, when it has existed for such a short time and accomplished relatively so little?)

John Conner considers me "naughty" for questioning his publication's glorification of sociopathic attacks against innocent people, random shootings and arson, Taliban mob lynchings, etc., since all such acts are only "harbingers of the coming collapse...." This is a rather flaccid qualifier from a magazine that advocates "the destruction of civilization" as a conscious praxis. In fact, neither the publication nor Conner bothers to distinguish what might arguably be justifiable acts of violent resistance from asocial or authoritarian violence. There is no attempt to make sense of the disparate acts listed under the suggestive heading, "Diary of Community Resistance"; nor is any credible argument proposed that they are anything other than the familiar, nightmarish accumulation of brutality that has gone on for millennia and that could go on for a long time to come.

Furthermore, I cited *Green Anarchist* texts that call the Aum cult's poisoning of Japanese subways and the neo-nazi bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building "inspiring," and their comment that the Unabomber letter-bombings and confused

manifesto "expressed the best and the predominant thinking in contemporary North American Anarchism," and asked GAs, "What does this have to do with radical theory or practice? What does GA stand for?" I guess we have their reply. Moore insinuates I need psychological evaluation for bringing up "relatively minor differences," and Conner thinks getting thrown into jail proves GAs right and righteous, that raising doubts makes me a cowardly do-nothing akin to . . . nineteenth century Renaissance scholar Walter Pater (you really know how to hurt a guy, John!).

Stewart Home's sorry response should give a good idea of the incoherence of his pamphlet. Figuring out who said what in *Green Apocalypse* is far from easy, particularly given Home's stated project of scandal and scission, of "projection and unconscious mirroring," and of a cynical Neoist manipulation and displacement of the "anchored authorial voice" that abdicates any responsibility for what one has said. But after once more reviewing the texts, I'm confident I got it correctly. As for his explanation of the origins of the cry, "Long Live Death," it may even have been used by rebellious Roman slaves and Barbary pirates, for all I know, but it is most notorious as a slogan of the Spanish fascists. To use it and then pretend otherwise is a gesture as dishonest as it is vacuous.

Sadly, John Moore substitutes voluntarily wounded indignation for principled debate. But he can't have it both ways. It makes no sense to start by saying I have attacked people over insignificant differences and then finish with the claim that the *FE* has been in decline for more than a decade, and that I am shifting to-



Mail to: Fifth Estate  
4632 Second Ave.  
Detroit MI 48201 USA

Four Issue Domestic Subscription: \$8  
Foreign including Canada and Mexico: \$10  
Prisoners: Free; Libraries & Institutions: \$12  
Corporations & Government Agencies: \$50

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Code \_\_\_\_\_

Begin my subscription with the next \_\_\_\_\_ issue/current \_\_\_\_\_ issue.  
An additional \$2 pays for half of a prisoner's subscription.  
Prisoner and GI subscriptions are free.

tion and distance myself from it, Moore accuses me of my "usual proprietorialism," of wanting to be Pope of a "movement" I wouldn't even care to join! He cannot seem to respect my right, established in his own introduction, to decline to be in his club.

As for his essay, "City Primeval: Fredy Perlman, Primitivism, and Detroit," I may be over-sensitive, but I doubt Moore would appreciate it any more than we did if others packaged his actual experiences and texts to fabricate some self-serving theoretical point of their own. People here were generally bemused or annoyed to see his lavishly inaccurate descriptions of our activities employed to argue that the FE circle created "the praxis that has come to be called primitivism," encapsulating "the origin of primitivism [and] locating it precisely in the lived experience of Detroit's inner-city dwellers," and that Fredy Perlman, a ferocious opponent of ideological homogeneity and system-building, had created "a primitivist theoretical agenda" (an agenda one will now presumably be able to find at least partially explicated in the primer of our "Leading British Primitivist"). As one of the natives under the anthropologist's magnifying glass, I think I had the right to declare his thesis of the Detroit origins of "anarcho-primitivism" ("or whatever terminology you prefer") a wish-fulfillment and fantasy, and to point out its myriad problems. One would think that Moore might receive objections from the very subjects of his research a little more circumspectly. But dogmatism and defensiveness go together.

Some words are in order on Wolfi Lanstreicher's letter. When I read Wolfi's work I can only shake my head and pity poor old Nietzsche, misused and abused once again. Wolfi likes to skip along beyond good and evil; thus in an essay on the Unabomber ("Fixed Ideas and Letter Bombs," published under the name Formerly Feral Faun in the Spring 1997 *Green Anarchist*), he writes, "The whole is beyond reform and revolt against the totality is necessary—which means that attacks against any part of the social system can be worthwhile as long as they are aimed at taking back one's life..." Critical of the Unabomber's "fixed idea" of freedom, he

counters, "The only freedom I consider to be worth pursuing is that my life be my own to determine, that my interactions be my own to create, that my self-enjoyment be central to how I live my life." This onanistic solipsism fails to recognize that our lives are never entirely "our own" to determine; we live in a world that forces us to choose. But Wolfi's fixed idea has interesting ethical ramifications—ramifi-

want the good from you." When Wolfi, on the other hand, concludes that he "will gladly sacrifice anything or anyone to create my own life and interactions as I choose," and that "Human community" is an abstraction, one can glimpse where the slippery slope is heading. He's already living in the world he desires.

Wolfi's logic brings to mind an encounter in 1971 between Noam Chomsky



cations that bring to mind *Green Anarchist*, which publishes him approvingly and praises his zine, *Venomous Butterfly*. He says of the Unabomber's victims, blithely, "The few deaths are no loss to me—in fact, I smile, thinking 'One less technician to control my life.' But killing off technicians one by one seems like an extremely slow way to destroy the industrial system." (Perhaps Wolfi can convince the Aum cult to release larger amounts of poison gas.)

Wolfi dispatches ethical problems effortlessly. The question of violence, for example, presents no difficulties. In a world in which individuals can create their own lives and interactions in accordance with their desires... conflict, and therefore violence, is inevitable. It is the state's monopoly on violence that I oppose, and when individuals use violence against the state (or any other aspect of the system of social control) and its tools, they are breaking that monopoly." Of course, he break that "monopoly" when they slaughter (and perhaps eat?) one another, too (and if the totality is the target, even baby-sitting grandmas best beware), but Wolfi won't object. "Taking a life," he assures us, "is not the ultimate act of domination. Forcing someone—or hundreds, thousands, millions, billions—into dependence on a social system that bleeds their lives away to reproduce itself... that is the ultimate act of domination. The killer lays no claim to the life of the victim until they kill them, and even then they lay no claim to the life but only to the ending of that life..." He apparently wants to "democratize" or "socialize" violence, to redistribute it; the state's violence justifies the individual's resorting to... anything. But as most people know, the State has no monopoly on violence. Wolfi's is the gay science of a Freddie Krueger.

"Verily," said Nietzsche's Zarathustra, "I have often laughed at the weaklings who thought themselves good because they had no claws." But Wolfi turns tragedy into farce, thinking the appearance of a set of claws license to do whatever he spontaneously wills. He forgets that Zarathustra has just told whoever cares to listen to "let your kindness be your final self-conquest. Of all evil I deem you capable: therefore I

to be "revolutionary"? We face a series of dire questions and uncertainties at a time when civilization itself is becoming increasingly unstable, and with it whatever human social and characterological capacities that might promise a way out. One can scream more loudly, pour poison gas in the subway, send bombs through the mail, or commit group suicide in hopes of arriving at the other side of a comet if one so chooses, but that will only provide more symptoms, not serious responses to the malaise.

Jaspers once commented that Heidegger's "total conception of... being" would inevitably become "another veil which is more fatal because it is precisely with sentences that come closest to Existence that real Existence is apt to be missed and to become unserious." One is reminded of the anarcho-primitivists' mix of insight and palpable folly. Their simplistic opposition to the "totality," their self-righteous celebration of catastrophe, and their grim conviction that their militant posture is not only theoretically correct but ethically viable, make theirs one more manifestation of a most tragic unseriousness. In his manifesto, their hero "FC" reminds them, "We have no illusions about the feasibility of creating a new, ideal form of society. Our goal is only to destroy the existing form of society." My essay was intended to challenge that diseased logic, and the murderous certainties of those now attracted to it. That required defending (as I see it, of course—I shouldn't have to remind people of that obvious fact) the primitivist insight from its own adherents.

## A Hard Anal Knot

Dear FE:

A hard Anal Knot keeps being tied, and retied, inside the collective skull. I thank David Watson for trying, one more time, to unravel it. ("Swamp Fever: Primitivism & the Ideological Vortex," FE Fall 1997).

Following the Bookchin, Biehl & Staudemaier definitions of "ecofascism"—"earth mysticism," "biocentrism," "a belief in intuition," "holistic organicism"—this condition *increases* as we go backwards in time. Our earliest human ancestors were the original "ecofascists." CroMagnons chewed hallucinogenic mushrooms in ecstatic chthonic rites inside the paleolithic caves. They holistically identified with, imaged and imitated the animals they hunted. Our sciences, technologies, medicines, musical, pictorial and linguistic arts originated in their intuitively cognized experience of the cycles and processes of the natural world surrounding and within them: *Homo Sapiens* was virtually born out of such "ecofascism." Is this what B, B & S intend to say?

Today's descendants of these Stone Age Nazis are not the EcoHippies, Deep Ecologists and Earth First!ers targeted by B, B & S, but what remains of our planet's "primal" or indigenous peoples: the tribes of North and South America, Australian Aborigines and New Zealand Maoris, the Kalahari Bushmen and Congo Pygmies, the Sami, the Siberian shamanic tribes, the Berber Tuaregs of Morocco: these "biocentric" and "spirit-ruled" drug-using magicommythic pagan trippers are all *ecofascists*, yes??

Every one of us at birth, in fact, is a Total Fascist. From birth to age 8, we are those polymorphous perverse Luddite Nazis who "make the trains run on time."

## Statement of Ownership, Management, & Circulation

Title of publication: Fifth Estate. Publication number: 710420. Date of filing: Oct. 21, 1997. Frequency of issue: quarterly. Annual subscription price: \$8. Complete mailing address 4632 Second Ave., Detroit, Wayne Co., Michigan 48201. Publisher: The Fifth Estate Newspaper. Editor: None. Managing Editor: None. Owner: The Fifth Estate Newspaper, 4632 Second Ave., Detroit, Wayne Co., Michigan 48201. Known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders: None. Extent and nature of circulation: (a) average number of copies each issue during the preceding 12 months; (b) actual number of single issue published nearest to filing date. Total number copies (net press run): (a) 5000; (b) 5000. Paid and or requested circulation: Sales through dealers and vendors: (a) 2416; (b) 2940. Mail subscriptions: (a) 1067; (b) 1160. Total paid and or requested circulation: (a) 3483; (b) 4100. Free distribution by mail: (a) 53; (b) 62. Free distribution outside the mail (Carriers and Other Means): (a) 1000; (b) 1000. Total distribution: (a) 3686; (b) 4287. Copies not distributed: (a) 1314; (b) 713. Return from news agents: (a) 0; (b) 0. Total: (a) 5000; (b) 5000. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (a) 72%; (b) 84%. I certify that the above statements are correct and complete: Peter Werbe, Business Manager.

After that, we "become rational beings" and never trouble the world again. Huh???

Something about "logical conclusions." Just being born on earth, according to the B, B & S criteria, makes us inherently "ecofascistic." We must then be separated from our sense of ourselves as living beings on living planet; such "holistic" knowledge must then be *demolized* to break and/or repress our passionate devotion to earth, which is the source—after all—of our life. But this "organic identification" must be condemned, disciplined, subverted and eventually exterminated toward the goal of making us all "rational beings"—i.e., like Bookchin, Biehl and Staudenmaier.

This is not a joke. We've been here before. To define our species as, in its "natural condition," *Ecofascistic*, is no different from the religious idea that we

## How I Stopped Recycling

Continued from page 7

processed under uncontrolled conditions in notorious polluting countries like China and Thailand. In addition, most of the products which are manufactured from what is recycled, such as park benches, traffic strips, and polyester jackets, can't be recycled a second time. So, when you set out at your curb is only one generation away from a landfill.

Michael Garfield, director of the Ann Arbor (Mich.) Ecology Center, notes that although all plastic containers bear the chasing arrows symbol with a number in the middle, suggesting that all such products are recyclable, it is only 1s and 2s that can be. He says, "Recycling these are only slightly better than letting them go into a landfill, given the amount of resources expended."

He's being generous if you compute the amount of energy needed to ship your leftover designer water bottle to China along with millions of others to be reprocessed, manufactured into a new item, then shipped back to the U.S., transported to a mall, purchased, discarded, and finally landfilled.

It's interesting to note how the last imperative in the ecological triad of reduce, reuse, recycle, has emerged as the one given prominence. The consequences of demanding an emphasis on the first—reduction of production—puts one on the path of confrontation with the Megamachine, something few people are willing to undertake. For instance, a campaign against plastic demands opposition not only to oil as a world commodity, but also to what the empire is willing to do to defend it.

As I write, the U.S. plans for another military strike against Iraq to insure its control of Middle East oil are on hold, but the generals and politicians are still in a blood froth. A good ecologist now needs to do more than just put tin cans in a curbside recycling bin. It requires being an anti-war activist as well.

are, "by Nature," "evil," "Born in sin," "innately corrupt," "heathen, savage, liable to backslide into bestiality"—this is the traditional patriarchal religious description of The Human Condition. *Unless*, of course, we are "straitened" by officially imposed system of: law, morality, ideological correctness. Beaten upside the head, and B, B & S would have it, by Rods of Rational Praxis.

Fascism is a State of Mind: the daily tyranny of Ideology Enforced by Terror. As David Watson argues: "Context matters." So does 3 million years of Hominid existence. So does the pragmatic question: just *who* carries the Biggest Stick?

Without exception, it has been the opportunistically designated EarthMystic, BioCentric, PaganIntuitive human groups who are invaded, colonized, enslaved, destroyed by precisely "higher order" states of national, religious and corporate powers. The conquerors always claim "progress," "rational enlightenment," "superior civilization," and "scientific/technology advancement" as their excuse to rob, exploit and/or wipe out the hippie-naked, stoned-on-nature, "non-rational" communities.

Late summer 1997, here in Humboldt County, four young Earth First! demonstrators self-chained to a tree stump inside the office of pro-timber-industry Congressman Frank Riggs had their heads pulled back, their eyelids forced open, and pepper spray daubed with Q-Tips sprayed directly into their eyes by fully-armed, helmeted members of the local Sheriff's Dept. Who are the "fascists" in this scenario? According to Bookchin, Biehl and Staudenmaier, the "dangerous People" here are the passionately "biocentric" young women who chained themselves to the tree stump and refused to give in, for a long, long time, despite searing pain and cop-inflicted humiliation.

The Conquest. The Inquisition. The Interrogation of Witches. COINTELPRO. Nothing is more "rationally arrived at" than the torture room. Concentration camps. Every prison cell. Are B, B & S *this ignorant* of human psychological history, or are they just flat-out liars? In either case, how much time and energy has been spent in a decade of diversionary debate with, and within, their *retro* terms: terms which define "the Enemy" as *our constituent matter in its functional trance of biocconscious interconnection with all sentient and dreamt things of the cosmos*—an "enemy" they dogmatically presume to attack, denounce and replace one more time with "man's plan for Your Life" (i.e., read their books).

The introduction to Biehl and Staudenmaier's *Lessons from the German Experience*, states: "ecological ideas have a history of being distorted and placed in the service of reactionary ends—even of fascism itself." Substitute "rational ideas" (or "religious ideas" or "liberal ideas" or "scientific ideas" or "esthetic ideas" or *any kind of ideas*) for B & S's "ecological ideas" if you need a measure of the stunning uselessness and banality of their definitions.

German Fascists also: breathed air drink water ate food fucked slept pissed shit and sweat. They used their language to affect and manipulate the world. They sat at their desks and wrote books. So do Staudenmaier, Biehl and Bookchin. So do we all. Therefore . . . ?

Barbara Mor  
Eureka, CA

## Multi-Use Name

Hi there:

This may be of some interest to your readers regarding "Swamp Fever." In his essay on the "ugly dispute" between the Neoist Alliance and *Green Anarchist*, David Watson repeatedly mentioned one "Luther Blissett."

Watson is apparently not aware of the fact that LB, far from being a single author, is a multi-use-name, an open identity adopted by several people and radical groups all over Europe. The Luther Blissett Project—named after a retired Afro-Caribbean soccer player—is not a "neoist" thing either. That name may have been used by the Neoist Alliance (which is not really a "neoist" thing itself), but since 1994 it's also been widely adopted by hundreds of radicals, ultra leftist pranksters and "anti-media guerrillas" in Germany, Spain and especially Italy, where LB's most famous actions and scams got journalists fired, court trials sabotaged, corporate money wasted, even a phony Hakim Bey book published etc.

While the concept of "Luther Blissett" as a "collective cultural terrorist" stems from such Marxian notions as the "General Intellect" (from the *Grundrisse*) and the *Gemeinwesen/Gattungswesen* (the community-species being), the Project is no playground for wannabe academics or middle-class tossers. LB's praxis includes both grassroots sabotage and high-level technological hoaxes.

You might find the Luther Blissett Project too "marxist" (or even "postmodernist")—certainly it's got no discernible "primitivist" stance, but if you are curious (and monoglot) you can visit the following English language website: <http://www.ecn.org/deviazioni/blissett> (mirror site at [www.geocities.com/Area51/Rampart/6812](http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Rampart/6812)).

There's plenty of books and other material by/on LB available in Italian and German, but that stuff would be hard to find in North America. By the way, *Transgressions* is not a "neoist-inspired" journal (if it were, why the hell would "anarcho-primitivist" John Moore submit his pieces?). It is published by the Geography Department of the University of Newcastle, UK.

Belletrati  
London

## History of the @

Dear FE:

In your Summer 1997 issue I read a short note on the Circle-A, at the end of the article "The History of the Black Flag." The author says, "Even harder to track down is the origin of the Circle-A as an anarchist symbol." I can tell you the truthful history as a privileged witness.

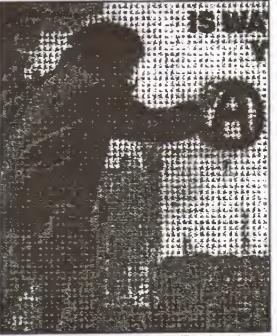
In 1964, the bulletin of French young anarchists (*Jeunesse Libertaire*) proposed the Circle-A as a brand new symbol for anarchists. That proposal had no following in France at the time, but it had a certain success in Italy, where my group, *Giovenile Libertaria*, Milano, on my suggestion, adopted it: sporadically in 1965, then regularly from 1965 on, not only in Milano but also in other cities by other members of the small federation which we were part of (Federated Groups of Young Anarchists).

A European conference of Anarchist Youth, held in Milano (December 1966) and an International Anarchist Camping organized on the shores of Como lake (July 1967) helped to spread the Circle-A outside Italy (and back to France too). Then May '68 did the rest.

organized on the shores of Como lake (July 1967) helped to spread the Circle-A outside Italy (and back to France too). Then May '68 did the rest.

Amedeo Bertolo  
Centro Studi Libertari  
via Rovetta 27  
20127 Milano, Italy

**FE Note:** It may predate even the above. We recently saw a documentary produced for Spanish television on the Civil War which showed an anarchist militia fighter with the symbol on his helmet.



photo/The Layabouts

## Vietnam: The Dirty War

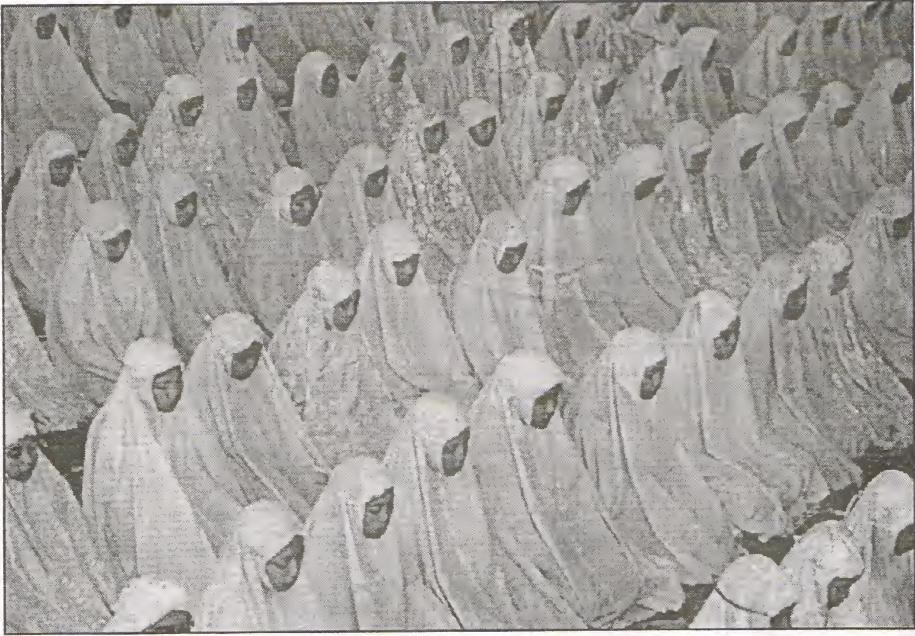
Continued from page 18

we're going to take the chickenshit to a new level. Nobody's going to tell me why my friends died, but they are going to write me up because I'm not going to salute this asshole.

I got late copies of the *Daily News* with the 1968 [Democratic] convention laid out all across the pages. I can remember walking up and down the barracks when everybody was in there and holding up the *Daily News* that showed the police beating people, and saying, "This is what we're in Vietnam protecting?"

I organized a whole lot of people to vote for Nixon, because I thought Nixon was going to end the war. I just turned twenty-one, so that was the first time I ever voted. It was all part of our protest to end the war. It was like we had an anti-war mood growing in the barracks. I can tell you, it got so serious—the harassment—that there was a discussion about killing one sergeant. That's always been amazing to me. We were not a line unit, an infantry unit, [where] killing was normal, but we discussed whether we should kill them. It was that kind of atmosphere. Fraggering. It was an incredible experience. It changed my life. I can remember actually thinking that that twenty-first birthday was the first day that I can remember that I wanted to mark things from.

I came back the day before Christmas in 1968, totally stressed out and anguished. I came back and dressed up in my uniform and went to midnight mass with the family because I wanted that attention, respect, acknowledgment. I still wanted something to be proud of. Stuff never goes away like that. At midnight mass, all the priest talked about was grace. I can remember leaving the church in a new level of anger because people were dying—this asshole doesn't say anything about what's going on in the world.



Women praying at an Islamic school in Jakarta, Indonesia for a solution to the country's financial crisis.

## The Shoplifter's Prayer

**M**ay the intercession of the glorious gift, o holy Thief, free us from the bitter commodity & deliver us from the spiritual anorexia of capitalism—

**O** my goddess of perpetual potlatch, protect us today & always from the police, the managers, the mirrors, the security guards & electronic surveillance devices! O perfect parasite, divine for us impunity & the imperfect passions of free abundance.

**W**e supplicate thee lords of libertarian license that all our thoughts & actions may principally focus on the cause of international anarchist revolution by the intercession of our Saints Goldman, Berkman, Bakunin & beyond. Grant us the courage to take what is rightfully ours as we rip off the bosses, bureaucrats & businessmen at all times proper & favorable for the liberation of desire.

**M**ay we never submit to the will of the State as we eternally state our will to subvert the status quo until anarchy, ecstasy & chaos recreate the wild universe anew. Amen.

—Sissy Sabotage